

GIANTS OF THE FOREST

AFRICAN HUNTING ADVENTURES
W.S. CHADWICK

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KING LEO

GIANTS OF THE FOREST

African Hunting Adventures

By

W. S. CHADWICK

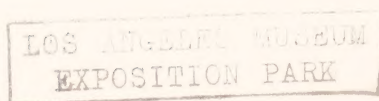


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PREFACE

THIS book has been compiled from material published in four continents during the past eighteen months, and at the request of many South African readers who have written kindly letters of interest and appreciation.

While hoping it may prove of general interest, I particularly invite the attention of natural history students to the various traits in the larger fauna wherein my description differs from that given in some standard works. Each incident is related as it actually occurred, and the conclusions drawn are based on the experiences of twenty-five years in close contact with the wild life of Africa.

Capt. Arnold Wienholt, D. S. O. M. C., author of *The Story of a Lion Hunt*, wrote in the *Brisbane Daily Mail* as a preface to my lion stories: "These stories are the best I have read, with the possible exception of Selous's; and I have read all I could get!" Captain Wienholt visits Africa every two years, and last year lived for seven months alone in a district bordering the Kalahari. He has both shot lions and studied them, and is a competent critic.

A Dutch editor who has commissioned me to write

PREFACE

a school-book series of Nature stories, recently admitted that even in South Africa—and especially among the younger generation—a lamentable ignorance exists concerning the African fauna. Owing to the conditions under which alone observation is possible, observers are likely to grow fewer with the passage of time, and it is hoped therefore that this contribution may not be without value.

The book has been compiled—as the stories were written for serial use—under camp conditions during a Rhodesian rainy season; while time has been limited by my engagement to conduct an American hunting party this season. To these facts, and my limited journalistic experience, defects in construction and technique must be ascribed. On those grounds I ask the indulgence of the critical reader.

My grateful thanks are due to the following periodicals for consistent kindness and encouragement during my initial essays in free-lance journalism, and for their courtesy in allowing me to include in this volume material that has appeared in their issues: *Cape Argus*, *Cape Times*, *Brisbane Daily Mail*, *Pictorial Weekly* (London), *Field and Stream* (New York), *Sydney Sun*, *Game and Gun* (London), *Wide-World Magazine* (London and New York), *Weekly Scotsman* and *Answers*.

Victoria Falls, S. R.

W. S. CHADWICK

March 3, 1928.

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GIANTS OF THE FOREST

GIANTS OF THE FOREST

PART ONE

IN THE COURT OF KING LEO

CHAPTER I

LEONINE FACTS AND FANCIES

MUCH that is written concerning the lion, both in the South African and overseas Press, is lamentably fallacious. Probably because people seem as perennially interested in the lion as in the cowboy of the "wild and woolly West," and the information so eagerly demanded is supplied in these days by hunters of limited experience.

During the past twenty years, the breed of big-game hunters of the late F. C. Selous and Cotton Oswell type—men who lived for years at a time in the lonely places and studied the denizens thereof—has died out. Nowadays, the man who rushes through Africa in a few months, and shoots a lion or two en route, is so described—erroneously.

One recent article described how a lion "roars his

challenge to all and sundry," "his proverbial fierceness," his "going forth to meet an enemy, roaring his challenge a little way off, and charging." It enlarged on "his uncanny cleverness in taking cover when hunting food," his "absolute fearlessness when hunting or at bay," how "he kills a buffalo by putting one paw on the withers and one on its nose, and jerking the head in under it—thus breaking its neck." How he "roars information of his kill to the world, takes out the entrails, buries them before eating, and finishes every shred of meat—even when putrid—before making a fresh kill." Writing from an experience of twenty-four years in the wild,—and fully recognizing that what is true in general may be totally false in the particular. I say that none of these things is true of lions as a species. To generalize at all, one must live in, and not merely visit, their haunts; and after many years so spent, one will recognize that there are numerous things still unrevealed.

Animal psychology, like human psychology, becomes modified by experience and environment. The habits of a hunted lion will vary according to the frequency with which he has been hunted, and the methods employed. An East African lion which has escaped mounted sportsmen armed with express rifles will adopt different offensive or defensive tactics from those of his breed which have escaped native "drives"; or the old muzzle-loader of the pedestrian native.

All such habits have been acquired in comparatively recent times. Those interested in natural characteristics must study the hunting—and not the *hunted*—lion. It is from observation of the former that my conclusions are drawn, and on which the foregoing assertions of inaccuracy are based.

Another writer said recently, that the soft-stepping, death-dealing fury which is the African lion, “is a lion only to the armchair occupant, and becomes a big dog in the veld.” That dictum also is inaccurate. He is a lion and a king by night, and a big, sleepy, stupid cat by day. Nevertheless, he is a cat of evil and uncertain temper, and sometimes assumes the majesty of power even in daylight. When he does so, the terror he inspires is not lessened by the sunlight, though the seasoned, straight-shooting hunter may meet his challenge with greater confidence.

Much of the terror associated with his name is no doubt due to impressions conceived in childhood, and these are hard to eradicate. A man meeting buffalo for the first time, takes liberties those old associations prevent him taking with the lion. Hence, it may be, the longer list of victims to the account of the former. But it is certain that any contempt of Leo will speedily result in an adjustment of the balance. Panic and contempt are equally wrong, and may have the same fatal results.

Many people still believe that the lion prefers a

human diet when obtainable. If that were so, the white man's advent would have found Africa populated chiefly by lions; for against the man-eater, men have little chance. Though he is excelled in strength, courage and wisdom by both elephant and buffalo, and in ferocity by the leopard, his amazing power of swift, scientific and silent slaughter is unique, and makes him the king of night he undoubtedly is.

In the following stories of experiences with lions—both hunting and man-eating—by night and day, I hope to show the discrepancies between fact and fancy to which I have referred. My first adventures were, fortunately, all in daylight, so I shall commence with those.

In 1903 I entered Rhodesia with a number of fallacious ideas concerning Leo. I imagined he patrolled the streets of Bulawayo by night seeking human victims; or at least lay in wait in the vicinity of the town. When, as I sat writing here at the Victoria Falls the other day, an American tourist expressed disappointment at not seeing any en route from Cape Town I smiled reminiscently! But when at the end of that year I took a wagon journey of ninety miles through the wild country between Selukwe and Fort Victoria without seeing any—though we offered ten fat mules and twenty young and juicy policemen as bait—I felt somewhat aggrieved, as well as disappointed.

I sojourned eighteen years in the "wild" which is King Leo's "court" before I made his acquaintance by night. Perhaps Fate "tempered the wind to the shorn lamb," for during those years when he appeared to me only as a "big cat," I lost much of the awe common to newcomers, and gained the nerve necessary to meet him in the dark.

I had patrolled the Victoria district for nearly a year before I met my first lion and, despite farmers' complaints of slaughtered cattle, had almost come to regard the species as extinct. I was traveling along a lonely road fifteen miles from the township, when the sleek black mule I was riding "propped" so suddenly that I discovered a utility in the long ears which had always seemed to detract from her rider's dignity. On this occasion they saved it by affording a handhold, which stopped my abrupt descent to the road.

At first I could discover no reason for her unusual behavior. Then I noted a waving motion of the long grass on the left of the road about a hundred yards ahead, and a moment later a lion emerged and walked slowly out on the road. I was engaged in cattle inoculation and had no rifle, but had passed a likely-looking tree about two minutes earlier; so I tried to wrench the mule's head round and retreat to it. Susi, however, had apparently lost all power of motion, and stood shivering as though the North Pole were somewhere in the vicinity!

Leo, meanwhile, gave us a speculative glance, stopping midway across the road, and after a casual survey continued his lordly and unhurried progress, entering the grass on the right. Standing in my stirrups I was able to follow his progress by the movement of the grass, and was relieved to see him heading for a kopje about a mile away on his right. After about five minutes the mule agreed to resume progress, and crossed his line of march at the nearest approach to a gallop she ever achieved!

At a kraal four miles ahead, natives showed me the remains of an ox this lion had dined on during the night, and the size of the feed explained his disdainful attitude toward so tasty a morsel as fat old Susi. So at our first meeting I learned that Leo was "no hog," and that his golden motto is: "Enough is as good as a feast!"

My next meeting was three years later, and some hundreds of miles west of Victoria, but strangely enough it was under somewhat similar circumstances. I was then in the Bechuanaland Protectorate Police, stationed on the old hunter's road which forms the border between the Protectorate and Southern Rhodesia, and extends from Francistown to the Zambesi. I had been visiting a substation fifty miles from my own, to inspect the Basuto police there, and was traveling alone.

Leaving the outstation at dawn one cold July

morning, I was cantering easily along, through veld covered with short "mopani" bush, with my rifle slung in the bucket, and muffled in my cavalry cloak. I was enjoying the keen morning air and the springy stride of the good mare under me, when there came a crash in some bushes to my right rear. The mare stopped dead on the instant, but I was sitting tight, and followed her glance to the right.

What we both saw was a huge black-maned shape in mid-air, which could not be mistaken for anything but the handsome scion of the leonine family he was. Alighting noiselessly in the instant of our glance, the great shape swept forward with the free-striding action of mighty shoulders, which is the king's tireless traveling gait, and which can carry him fifty miles between dark and dawn if need be.

Reflection would have assured me that he was indifferent to our presence, since—although but the length of a single bound away—he was heading in a direction parallel with our own, and at a pace he never uses in approaching prey. But reflection was denied me by the mare, which, taking no "joy in this thing of beauty," struck the ground with her front hoofs, gathered her haunches under her and headed for home at a pace that would have made her a name in any local gymkhana. In view of the circumstances I did not argue, but comparing her behavior with that of the mule, felt bound to admit its greater wisdom!

On both these occasions I had felt something of the "thrill" I had expected meetings with lions to produce, though such feeling was due to a realization of potentialities, proximity, solitude and the lion's appearance, rather than to any real danger. But when in 1904 I visited England, and related the first of these experiences (in response to inquiries as to meetings with lions) I found people both disappointed and incredulous. One man said: "The lion must have escaped from a Zoo! Wild lions kill and eat both men and mules on sight!"

Then I realized my error and converted my disappointing adventure into a prose epic. I described the distressing death of Susi and the horrid sound of the rending flesh, my imaginary desperate scramble up the tree, and how I was held prisoner there for two days until eventually relieved by a search party!

The success of this yarn was remarkable. I still think lovingly—when thirsty—of the number of free whiskies and sodas it produced! I think, too, of that insatiable appetite for the marvelous which compelled it, whenever I read hunting yarns evidencing a vivid imagination; and I wink unseen at the unknown and invisible author or authoress!

CHAPTER II

LEO'S HUNTING AND KILLING METHODS

IN 1912 I took up transport riding in Barotse-land, and knowing that my traveling would be done at night, I hoped for a more intimate acquaintance with the king. For like all good aristocrats, he lives chiefly by night and achieves a more striking personality, both literally and figuratively, during the hours of darkness. My optimism was justified, and from then onward I had ample opportunity for studying his methods.

My first journey was over two hundred fifty miles of country between the railway and the Zambesi at a point three hundred miles above the Falls. Game was plentiful en route, but I saw no lions. For the first time, however, I heard the royal voice, and frankly, I was disappointed.

During all the years of my acquaintance with Leo I have never heard him utter the open-mouthed, full-throated sound the term "roar" implies. What is so described is a long-drawn, plaintive grunt, of vast volume and far-reaching range, but produced with

nearly closed mouth, and with an upward lifting of stomach to spine, very similar to the action of a pair of bellows.

He utters it to call his mate or troop for the night's hunting; at dawn in satisfaction over a full stomach—or lament at an empty one—as he goes to his lair; or again, to drive game within striking range of his ambushed mates. It is not expressive of anger or challenge, and is very nearly counterfeited by the voice of the ordinary domestic bull.

When disturbed while lying on a kill, he opens his mouth wide—in the manner imaginative artists love to portray—and emits a harsh, hissing, full-throated volume of furious sound, which, while pregnant with ferocity and menace, is of lesser volume and range than his hunting and thanksgiving song. If he really stocks a genuine roar in his repertoire, he uses it so infrequently that even old hunters seldom hear it!

Throughout 1912-1913 I was riding transport along the banks of the Zambesi, and during that time killed my first lion. There is a river en route called the Njoko (Monkey), and at one time there was a native kraal where the road crosses it. The natives had been compelled to move owing to the depredations of the lions there. Beginning with forced tribute of cattle, one of the troop eventually took to man-eating. The climax came when he



A PAIR OF LIONS

entered a hut one afternoon and seized a woman. The natives secured the entrance with a sheet of corrugated iron, fired the hut, and burned lion and woman on a common funeral pyre!

This had happened many years before, but since then a transport rider named John Horn had been killed there. He was an extremely powerful man who had killed a number of lions, but on this occasion the man-eater crouched behind an ant-heap as he was returning from hunting, sprang upon him from behind, and bit him clean through from chest to back. Natives drove him from his kill and conveyed the body to the nearest magistracy for burial.

About seven years later a Greek cattle trader was killed and eaten here, while his mob of loose cattle was left untouched! It is a strange fact that where lions have once taken to man-eating, such incidents occur at intervals of several years. Theories have been mooted that the taste becomes hereditary, but in many cases the killer is too old to sire progeny. My own view is that young members of the troop have witnessed the kill, or the subsequent meal, and when they are driven desperate by hunger in later years, or brought to bay, the memory of that early experience returns, and the example is imitated. For fear of man stays with the hunting lion until death, and he frequently starves on rats and rabbits, in preference to attacking humankind.

The lion hunts at night and needs no cover in the dark. His vision is then keener than that of the game he hunts, and his scent is keener still. The wind is his greatest enemy. During the day the game lies up in the bush, secure in the knowledge that their enemy's pads fear the hot sand, just as his sun- and sleep-dazed eyes fear the sunlight. When he arises in the cool of evening the game forsake the bush for the vleis, where are grass and water, and no concealment for the lion.

Leo makes for the bush belt on the leeward side, and skirts the vlei silently and swiftly. When he detects game he seldom attempts to approach it in the open, even if hunting alone. He watches its movements and waits until it approaches within fifty yards of his concealment. Then a stealthy, belly-to-ground approach and a few lightning forty-foot bounds may yield a meal.

But he generally hunts in company, and when game is located the troop sinks to earth in the leeward belt, while the leader retraces his steps, crosses the vlei out of scent range, proceeds down the windward side until abreast of the herd, and there shatters the silence with his vibrating hunting song. The herd—panic-stricken by his voice and scent—rushes upon the hidden killers, and death comes swiftly. Hunting alone, he does so in a silence more terrifying than any roar. The “killing roar” is a product of human

imagination. The lion who has killed is much too hungry and busy to waste time in vocal exercises!

Soon after my arrival on this route I had occasion to send a wagon ahead of me to the Njoko, with instructions to the driver to await my arrival there. When I did arrive, I found the wagon upside down at the drift, with the fore part in the river; bales of goods opened and spread out to dry, and the driver and leader crouched over a small fire, with thin and hungry-looking oxen huddled close to them!

"What the devil is all this, Sam?" I demanded.

"*Morre, baas,*" (good morning, master) he returned, with the true phlegm of his breed.

"Morning be damned," I retorted. "What is all this?"

Then the story came out, in Dutch. Arriving at the drift in the early morning, he had outspanned on the near bank, instead of crossing at once. Proceeding to inspan near sunset, ten lions had appeared in the roadway and evinced great interest in his proceedings. The loose cattle had stampeded into the bush, and the lions had followed. Sam had been in such haste to efface himself that he had driven over the bank and upset the wagon! The surviving cattle had been recovered twelve miles away, but the leader had refused to herd them, and they had since subsisted chiefly on the view.

I found five head missing, and a ring of vultures

on some trees half a mile away showed where to look for them. Three lay in a twenty-yard circle, and two others twenty yards from them. All presented the same aspect: the carcass lying on its side, head and muzzle twisted upward to the sky; spinal column dislocated, teeth marks through the neck, and claw marks on the withers; each one disemboweled, and all flesh eaten off legs and neck; the ribs and hide being left to the vultures and hyenas; the latter seeing to it that little remained to become "putrid"!

The lion's method of killing is a uniform one, unless molested. Springing upon the withers of his victim, the shock of his five-hundred-pound weight brings it to earth. Reaching out a mighty forearm, so padded with muscle that a sledge-hammer can not break it, he fixes five claws strong as steel hooks in the muzzle, and applies traction. Under the impulses of pain and force the muzzle turns upward, great canines meet in the throat, powerful jaws give an added twist to the neck, and the axis of the spinal column is dislocated; causing instant death.

Even in such a standard work as Lydekker's *Wild Life of the World* this method is disputed; but it is nevertheless a fact that what scientists know well by theory, *i. e.* that any dislocation of the axis in its relation to the atlas spells death, Leo knows also by practise!

After this experience I built a stout pole kraal at

this river, and usually set a trap gun outside. One morning at sunrise, I let the cattle out and went to remove the trap gun. Then a native drew my attention to some hartebeeste across the river, and I went after them. Having shot two, I returned, and my driver informed me that two lions had lain watching me remove the trap gun! As evidence he showed me the urine-soaked soil, and the imprint of their bodies twenty yards away, while he himself had watched their departure.

Yet the bush was no more than three feet high, and the lion in action is an upstanding mighty figure. Truly he is as expert in taking cover as in killing, when cover is necessary! These lions had arrived after sunrise. They were "big cats" and probably full fed; but I knew that with nightfall they would become hungry "kings" again, and that having seen my cattle they would attack. So I took the offensive, and with two natives, followed them up.

We had proceeded about three miles when something strange, looking somewhat like a small ant-heap about sixty yards ahead, led me to stop and point this out to the natives. As we watched, a second and smaller "ant-heap" appeared beside the first, and we identified the objects as the heads of a yellow-maned lion and lioness, set in a frame of evergreen bush. We had evidently disturbed their siesta, and they were endeavoring to make out what we were.

I had confidence in my rifle, and sitting down in a comfortable position, I aimed carefully at the center of the largest head, but before I pressed the trigger the lioness rose to her feet and stood facing me. Remembering stories of that marital affection which induces the lioness to avenge her mate, I shifted the sights an inch to the left, and fired as the top of her chest showed above the foresight.

As the bullet struck she collapsed in a heap, while at the same instant her mate came to his feet with a grating snarl. For an instant he stood irresolute, while I hastily forced another cartridge into the chamber. Then as I aligned the sights, and before I could bring them to bear, he disappeared in a single bound.

Meanwhile, from whirling dust clouds and flying tufts of grass, came harsh rasping sounds of such devilish intensity that I hastily moved behind a large tree ten yards to my rear, for greater mental comfort! I then located my natives up a tree five yards away. It was apparently their unnoticed retreat that had brought the lioness to her feet, and given me a better target.

When the dust and turmoil ceased I approached the body, inwardly hoping that she would not emulate the buffalo's counterfeiting of death, and his swift resurrection! She proved really dead, but she was a mangy old beast, with a skin plentifully scarred and

of little value. Perhaps her age and lack of beauty explained her mate's indifference to her loss!

At the time, I rather regretted his failure to attack, but when eight years later I met him in kindly guise—as I shall relate later—I realized that if he had shaken my nerve on this occasion, I might have fallen a victim in my nocturnal adventure.

Instead, I was left with that pleasant sense of dominance every lion, rhinoceros and elephant, which falls before his rifle, brings to the hunter. So much confidence, indeed, is born of successful encounters that it sometimes degenerates into carelessness, with fatal results!

CHAPTER III

A BANQUET AND A BATTLE

ANOTHER daylight experience was one which falls to the lot of few men, and was worth going far to seek. That experience was a "close up" of a leonine banquet.

It happened in 1918, by which time I was engaged in transporting tobacco by ox wagon from Fort Jameson, in Northeastern Rhodesia, to Tete, in Portuguese East Africa. Being rather tired of venison I left the wagons one morning in search of a few guinea-fowl or pheasants. Armed with only a shotgun, and accompanied by one native, I had shot two guinea-fowl, and was returning by a different route to the wagons, when on mounting the bank of a small donga I came upon the bodies of a lion and a sable antelope twenty yards in front of me.

The lion's head was lost in the interior of the sable, but while the latter was very obviously dead, loud sucking noises—reminiscent of a vulgar person negotiating the soup course—assured me that Leo was very much alive. I had no desire to be guilty of lese-majesty by interrupting a royal banquet, and

would willingly have withdrawn, but before I could do so the lion withdrew his head and turned it in my direction, giving me a close up of a magnificent black-maned lion in his banqueting hall.

And what a picture he presented: the great mane covered with blood and filth, the yellow eyes narrowed ominously and the tufted tail beating a slow tattoo on the ground behind him. He gazed for a moment in surprised indecision, then he rose slowly to his feet. The great mane assumed the properties of porcupine quills, becoming crown and ruff combined; the mouth half opened, displaying impressive dental equipment; and a harsh snarl indicated that he found my presence a serious annoyance.

With my life at stake, I could not decide in that instant whether I most regretted the absence of a rifle or a camera, and to this day do not know which I would have taken, had the choice been offered me!

Yet my mental processes achieved an astonishing celerity. I remembered the reputed painlessness of Leo's executions and hoped report spoke truly; recollected stories of lions being slain by shotguns—without feeling any confidence. I recalled the story of a hunter holding his hat in his teeth by the brim, in similar circumstances, and steadily outfacing the lion; of an old native's advice to "sit down," as the lion could not spring low, and would retire in disgust if he missed his object!

Meanwhile, I slowly brought the shotgun to the ready position, inch by inch, without removing my eyes from the lion, but resolving to leave him the initiative, and to fire only if he attacked. All this in the space of five seconds! Then his glance dropped to the dead buck, with, I thought, a little of regret and indecision, returned to me for an instant, and next moment he turned slowly round. With one final glance and a half-hearted, admonishing snarl, he bounded lightly over the dead buck and disappeared at a noiseless trot into the forest depths.

My native finished the buck; so when Leo returned that night, it was to an empty larder. I had noted the extensive cleaning process he must find necessary after a feed, and felt some sympathy for him; but I thought my native deserved some compensation for his fright. He had retreated unobtrusively into the donga, and when found there, was still a dirty gray in color. He explained that his fright was on *my* account; but I found such altruism difficult of belief!

I was equally fortunate in witnessing another unique incident some years later, in Portuguese Angola. I was returning from a hunt for meat, and coming to the edge of a forest belt at sundown I saw several animals on a large ant-heap in the middle of a big vlel ahead. Looking through my glasses I saw a lioness and two cubs playing and rolling over and

over, while two lions, one much smaller than the other, walked slowly to and fro, halting occasionally to grunt their even-song.

Midway in his "sentry go" the smaller lion stepped and placed a paw upon the rolling lioness. Instantly the big lion wheeled and crouched flat, while the hissing snarl formerly described broke forth, accompanied by a swirl of dust raised by his sweeping tail. The younger lion echoed the snarl and dropped flat to earth. A gathering of mighty quarters, and the two great bodies met in mid-air, to roll over in a furious dust cloud.

Within that dust cloud there must have been swift and deadly work with tooth and claw, for in less than a minute the young lion broke from it and sprang several yards into the vlei. There he turned and snarled his defiance, but as the victor echoed the snarl and crouched to spring, the vanquished made off at a limping trot. At once the big lion got up, and on the air arose his deep chant, which is termed a "roar."

Then I walked out on the vlei. A moment's indecision, and the four lions turned and made off at a swift trot for the bush. But when I examined the ant-heap, the amount of blood showed what terrible punishment had been inflicted in that short sharp skirmish!

The young lion was probably the progeny of a former litter, and had not yet mated. Once a lion

mates he is seldom found with other full-grown lions when in company with lionesses. Battle between the full-grown males usually ends in serious injury and sometimes death.

Apart from rhinoceros and elephant, the only animal capable of defeating the lion in single combat is the buffalo bull in his prime. So well do the bulls guard the herds that Leo seldom secures even a cow or calf. I have myself seen a herd successfully defend the calves all night against the utmost strategy of a lion and lioness!

The late Captain Cotton Oswell related in one of his books how he once came upon a wounded buffalo bull engaged in combat with three lions, and in spite of his wounds, the famous hunter records an impression that the buffalo would have defeated the lions had the combat been allowed to proceed.

However that may be, it is certain that a single lion seldom attacks a full-grown buffalo bull, and knowing the determined fighter the latter is, and his great strength and weight, I am inclined to commend Leo's wisdom!

CHAPTER IV

A LEONINE GAME OF CHIESS

MY FIRST nocturnal experience occurred during my initial journey from Tete to Fort Jameson, at a place about eighteen miles from the Rhodesian border. We had inspanned about five p.m., and an hour or two later—as it was growing dark—the king's voice was suddenly heard about half a mile behind us on the road.

Within five minutes it was heard ahead of us, and to right and left of the leading wagons, of which there were ten, my own forming the rearguard. This indicated that at least three lions were on the prowl, and perhaps other silent killers in ambush.

But on this occasion Leo was up against an unknown factor in the game of his hunting strategy. I had no loose oxen. All my two hundred head were in the yoke, and the stampede he expected was therefore impossible. It is seldom a lion attacks a beast while inspanned, so I told the drivers to go ahead and make plenty of noise with whip and voice. In places, however, the road was bordered with ten-foot grass, and it was a nervous progress!

My driver evidently thought so, and kept glancing anxiously down the road behind him. Coming to a slight declivity, he omitted to apply the brake—which necessitated going behind the wagon—and the wagon knocked the wheel-ox off his legs and passed over him. Luckily the wheel missed him, but we were detained five nerve-racking minutes there, getting him inspanned again. Next morning I found the driver had left his much-prized whip lying in the road, rather than remain a second longer to pick it up!

By this time two lions had detailed themselves as rearguard, and walking abreast in the grass on each side of the road, kept up a sonorous chant about fifty yards behind us. I therefore climbed on the lead, and lying flat on my stomach, with rifle in hand, I faced the road behind me. Whenever the pair showed, I sent a bullet as close to them as possible to check their ardor.

In this fashion we covered some four miles, and arrived at the clearing in the bush where we usually outspanned. Here we drew the wagons up five abreast, bringing the teams behind them, so that in front and rear they were protected by the line of wagons. Huge fires were lighted on each side, and until after midnight (when the moon rose) we sacrificed sleep to a game of chess with Leo as follows:

For two hours silence, and outside the firelit circles, darkness. Tired cattle slowly chewing the

cud; some with heads on shoulders snatching forty winks. Drivers and myself peering anxiously into the darkness, and then—allowing conviction that Leo has confessed defeat and gone home to assert itself—we assume half-recumbent positions by the fire, and begin to nod.

A sudden rush, as two hundred oxen spring to their feet; a yell from the natives; firebrands hurled through the darkness on the left; a snapping of twigs under a heavy body; and a faint snarl announces Leo's resentment at being foiled of a success his patience had so nearly achieved.

Another hour passes, and his soft approach is repeated; this time from the right. But now we are alert and listening with taut nerves. A twig snaps, in spite of velvet pads, and peering in the direction of the sound, we note two small opalescent stars, nearer to earth than stars ever came. I aim carefully by firelight; the bullet whines through the air, and the stars disappear; while a crackling of dry leaves marks the line of the king's rapid retreat.

Again he alters his plan of attack. Calling a comrade, the pair advance without concealment, their silent kinsmen lying in ambush at strategic points in the darkness. Thundering an infernal duet, filled with menace, the pair advances; but our oxen evince a wise preference for our society and the firelight, and the expected stampede does not materialize.

At twenty paces two pairs of eyes become visible, and again a bullet rakes the air in their vicinity, while I curse my inability to see my rifle sights clearly. For the third time Leo retreats, and before his hunting council can solve the problem of such unusual bovine behavior, and evolve a new plan of attack, the moon has risen, and we have achieved "checkmate."

As we pull on an hour later, we hear his lament some two miles away, and at dawn we have left the scene of his defeat eight miles behind us.

On my second journey I played a somewhat similar game. Outspanning one night at midnight, after a hard trek, we had barely dropped the yokes when a crescendo duet from the darkness ahead warned us that we must banish thoughts of sleep, as the young moon had long since set, and darkness would continue until daybreak. And so it proved. All night that pair tried every leonine art to secure free rations, while we barred their access to supplies.

On this occasion I had a riding donkey tied to the wagon, and near to dawn, my driver whispered that a lion was approaching through the grass. Standing beside the donkey, I peered into the darkness, but could see nothing, although intermittent rustlings indicated a stealthy approach. As I fired at the sound, my driver, from the top of the wagon, said he had seen eyes disappear, and then reappear farther on.

That, however, was the king's last attempt, and

at daybreak a bullet-scored tree, and great pug marks, showed that when I fired he was only twenty-five paces from me! I made mental note of the many nights' loss of sleep to be booked against Leo on this road, and resolved that he should liquidate my account at the first favorable opportunity.

This occurred three months later; but not until I had provided him with a free meal, which alone induces him to remain in the vicinity of his nocturnal activities.

CHAPTER V

A SETTLEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

BY THAT time I was conducting transport from Fort Jameson to Dedza, in Nyassaland, and it was in November, 1919, that I made the initial trip which gave the king his meal, and myself the opportunity of presenting the bill. On this occasion I had with me three wagons, ten loose oxen and two donkeys. Part of the journey was through a well-stocked game reserve, and it was on my return trip through this that Leo issued his transiently successful challenge.

We had outspanned among the trees on the road, wagon behind wagon, instead of going on to the open ground and pulling the wagons up abreast as usual. This was in order to get firewood, as the flat near the river two miles ahead was bare. It was about eleven p.m. when I climbed into my half-tent wagon and went to sleep.

I had barely dozed off, when all the teams came to their feet as one, with a clatter of the yokes to which their heads were tied. The natives, sitting round the fires still eating, had also jumped to their feet, and were gazing into the darkness. As I reached

the roadway the loose oxen dashed out of the bush on the left; so taking my lantern, I at once rounded them up and counted them. They were all there; so I imagined the scent of a lion at a distance had startled them. Returning to the road, I found my driver peering intently into the darkness on the right.

"What is it?" I asked him.

"He's eating!" he replied.

"What is eating?" I asked skeptically.

"The lion!" he answered. "Listen! He is breaking the bones!"

I could hear nothing, and could not credit so rapid and silent a kill, even to the king. Also, I had counted the loose cattle and knew they were all there. Therefore I asked testily: "What the devil is he eating?"

"It must be the donkey," he replied.

My two donkeys were loose, and after I retired they had wandered into the bush a few yards from the natives' fire, on the left of the wagons. I now remembered subconsciously noting—as I went to round up the cattle—my white riding donkey emerging in haste from the bush, and a streak of red in the air behind him. He now stood by the wagon, but his mate—a fat old pack donkey—was missing.

Inquiries elicited an explanation of the red streak I had seen. The natives by the fire had heard panting breath close to them, and had hurled a firebrand in the direction of the sound at the instant the white donkey

raced past them. The pack donkey had obviously met with disaster; but, I reflected, where was the killing roar about which so much has been said and written? Where, also, was the "cry of the victim"?

No one had ever led me to expect this utter silence in which the destruction of a strong beast had been accomplished within twenty paces of where I stood. The silence was indeed ghastly and more terrifying than any roar I had ever heard! King Leo had suddenly appeared as King Death, as silent, swift and invincible as the King of Terrors himself. The spirit of annihilation stalked abroad in living and breathing form; and as I stood awed in its mighty taloned presence, the Wild whispered to me of my insect proportions, and chuckled gleefully in my ear as I admitted the impeachment without resentment.

The first and obvious thing to do was to remove the cattle from the vicinity. I could perhaps have driven the killer from his prey, but that might have cost another life—human or bovine—and I calculated that if left undisturbed I might find his majesty in the vicinity next morning and present the bill. This was now increased by one dead donkey and further loss of sleep, besides a rude shock to my dignity.

By standing beside each driver with lantern and rifle as he worked, we at last got the teams inspanned again. We twice saw the gleam of feline eyes, and heard loud sucking noises, while doing this; and on

each occasion I sent a bullet in the royal diner's direction, but with no effect.

It may be noted here that a bullet does not disturb Leo unless it strikes sufficiently close to give an impression of force. Its whine as it passes over, he probably imagines to be a new species of insect, and ignores it! Pulling on two miles to the bank of the small river, we passed the rest of the night in peace. Next morning, accompanied by two natives, I returned to the scene of the kill.

Examination of the ground showed that Leo had followed the wagons, passed them on the right, with their long teams of sleeping cattle; passed the loose oxen in the bush; crossed the team lying in front in the darkness, and made straight for the two donkeys. He had made his kill twelve paces from the fire round which a dozen natives were sitting! Afterward, he had dragged his prey fifteen yards away beneath a large tree, and proceeded to dine. Later—perhaps when I fired—he had removed ten paces farther and continued his meal, afterward departing with what remained. These things confirmed a conclusion I had long since reached, viz., that lions do not fear men or fires when the prey is in sight. They showed, too, how the donkey scent had prevailed over that of nearly a hundred oxen, and had induced him to ignore much good and easily procured beef!

Following his spoor, it soon became evident that

he was carrying the donkey's carcass on his back, as an irregular groove in the sand—obviously made by the point of a dangling hoof—ran beside the imprint of tremendous paws, which indicated his great size and weight. This leonine habit has often been disputed, and in Lydekker's *Wild Life of the World* it is asserted to be fallacious, and that the lion *drags* his prey. But the evidence of my eyes on this occasion showed that he had carried it for at least a mile and a half!

That he removed it at all showed the value he set upon his kill, since he seldom removes beef or venison, although he may return for anything the vultures may have left. I knew that thus loaded he would not go far; so while my unarmed natives followed the spoor, I kept keen watch on the surrounding veld. Hunting alone like this, I could hope for no assistance if I made mistakes, and realized that I could not afford any.

We had gone about a mile when we picked up the donkey's head and neck vertebrae. The flesh had been eaten off the neck and face, and the weight of the dangling head as it was carried, had caused a section of the spinal column to break off. About five hundred yards farther on, we came to a large ant-heap surrounded at the base by thick foliage. Stopping the natives, I whispered: "Be careful. This is a likely place. Now speak loudly, but do not shout!"



A LION MOTHER

1861

As the natives commenced to talk, up sprang our quarry, appearing to our startled senses about the size of a buffalo, as he swept forward and away from us with the noiseless stride of his breed. Had he sprung from cover in our direction, one of us would have fallen victim. As it was, the natives gasped, "*Wa! Mukulu!*" (Oh! A big one!); and in an instant we dashed after him.

Crossing a small flat fifty yards ahead, he strode forward into open parklike country, and as I reached the edge of the timber bordering the flat, he halted and turned, standing broadside on and looking back in our direction. My rifle was a long-barreled Lee-Enfield target model, and with the sights at three hundred yards, I leaned against a tree, sheathed my nerves in mental ice, and aiming well behind the shoulder, fired.

Down crashed the king as though lightning stricken, and as I watched, the great head jerked upward three times, in a desperate effort to rise, then lay still. I was assured that he was down "for keeps"; while the natives exclaimed jubilantly: "To-day we take his skin!"

But it is not seemly to intrude on a royal death-bed, and for ten minutes I sat on an ant-hill—where I could note any resurrection—and smoked a cigarette with enjoyment. Then I cautiously approached what I hoped would be a corpse. But although the grass

was fairly short, I could see nothing, and finally had to put one native up a tree to locate the body and direct me.

Followed by the other I went forward and at ten paces saw my prize. In the same instant he saw *me*. The great head jerked upward, and a shattering snarl of rage sent the blood racing in my veins. Without dwelling on my aim, I sent a bullet to the heart, and stood ready to repeat the shot. This proved unnecessary, and five minutes later we were examining a splendid specimen of the black-maned lion. A taxidermist in Cape Town afterward said it was the largest head he had seen, and when mounted I received twenty-five pounds for it, ten of which went for mounting.

We found that my first bullet had broken the spine, and this had proved my salvation. Had he been able to rise when I approached him, this story would not have been written. I had seen enough of the leonine power to realize potentialities if fortune frowned. I remembered that black-maned lions were scarce, and that a mangy old animal with a valueless hide was equally capable of making me a subject for an epitaph. I resolved to preserve toward Leo in future an attitude of armed neutrality, so long as he refrained from attempts to dine at my expense. An experience in this reserve six months later confirmed that resolve!

CHAPTER VI

A LESSON BY LAMPLIGHT

ON ARRIVAL in Fort Jameson I ordered an acetylene headlamp, under the impression that this would be an advantage in nocturnal interviews with Leo. I learned greater wisdom when the theory was tested. I used the lamp once only, under the circumstances I will now relate, and I shall never use one again.

My wife accompanied me occasionally, and was with me on this adventure. She was accompanied by her pedigreed Airedale terrier, and we had ten wagons, but no loose oxen or donkeys.

Outspanning about eleven one night, with wagons drawn up three abreast, and our own in the center of the leading three, we ate a hasty meal and turned in. I was sleepy, and had quickly dozed off, but my wife was still awake, and the thirty-odd natives still chatting round the fires in groups, when the three front spans sprang to their feet with a sound like rushing wind. Immediately afterward a Zulu driver came to my wagon and said: "Lions, baas!"

Now, in Barotseland, I have seen oxen rush back on the wagon when no lion approached within two hundred yards, on merely getting his wind from a distance; so as these spans still stood in their places on the trek chain, I judged the wind had carried the scent to them. I gave sleepy orders to build fires round the wagons and detail a guard to keep them going. Then I rolled over to invite sleep again. In less than two minutes Petrus (the driver) was back and whispering urgently: "Baas, the lions are here! Kruisman is dead!"

Kruisman was the offside leader of the wagon on my right, and was a powerful ox which often gave trouble to handle. So I asked angrily: "What do you mean by 'he's dead'?" For we had heard no sound, and the span he led still stood quietly in their places.

"He's *dca'd*, baas! The lion is on him!" Petrus answered.

I always slept with my headlamp attached to my helmet, and with a loaded rifle beside me; so in three minutes I was out of the wagon with lamp burning brightly, and rifle in hand. Climbing over the dissel-boom of the wagon on my right, I looked along the twenty-ox span, and in the dark bush ahead—fully thirty yards in front of the leaders—I saw two pairs of eyes side by side. I concluded that these were the killers, and that being disturbed, they had retreated temporarily from their victim.

Accompanied by two armed drivers, I walked half-way along the span and sighted on one of the two pairs of eyes. I did not hope to hit them except by chance, as it was impossible to see the bodies, or to tell if these were to right or left of the eyes, *i. e.* whether the lions were looking over their right or left shoulders, or standing facing me. From examination of the huge head shot in the reserve, I knew that a bullet striking the eye itself would do little damage, and would probably pass out over the shoulder, for the skull is little more than three inches broad in the largest lion.

The massive appearance is due to the wide spread of the eye sockets, and the covering of flesh, jaw muscles and mane. This means—in the dark—shooting at an invisible target. Still, I hoped the shot might go close enough to drive them farther away. All this takes time to read, and longer to write, but at the time it passed through my brain like a lightning flash!

As the shot rang out, the eyes jerked sidewise, and at the same instant the first approach to a real roar I had ever heard shattered the silence, as it seemed, from beneath my feet. It was a devilish, hissing, vibrating volume of furious sound that induced in me an icy concentration I have never achieved before or since. Ten paces in front of me, in the place where Kruisman had lain, two circles of living

flame—appearing large as saucers in the light from my headlamp—revealed the real killer.

As the light flashed on them they sank lower inch by inch, while the fiendish snarl was unceasing, and told of mighty muscles flexing in the darkness for a lightning spring at the circle of light on my helmet. Deaf and blind to externals, I calculated the instant when the great body would be bunched in readiness to launch itself, and thus present greater bulk. Petrus's voice from behind me seemed to come from a great distance, saying: "Look out, baas! He's coming here!"

Far away I heard a faint yelp, while with eyes glued to my sights, centered between those flaming circles, I lowered the "barleycorn" inch by inch with them. Then, as their downward motion checked, I dropped it an inch to where the spreading chest should be, and fired in the instant the powerful quarters gathered for the spring.

A soft "klop," a choking snarl, the living lamps extinguished, and the first breath I seemed to have drawn for an hour filled my lungs; while a scrambling sound in the darkness was answered by Petrus's exultant shout: "Ah, baas! He's got it!"

Calling for my lantern, and accompanied by the drivers with torches, we rapidly unhooked the spans and brought them in rear of the wagons, leaving an empty space of twenty yards between the wagons and

the place where, with muzzle pointing to the sky and neck broken and twisted, Kruisman lay silent at the end of his last trek.

Large fires had already been built on each side of the road, and approach from front and rear was now barred by a line of eighteen-foot wagons, each loaded with bales of tobacco weighing four tons. Nevertheless, with three taloned destroyers close at hand in the darkness—one of them badly wounded—sleep was out of the question for the five hours that remained before dawn.

Throughout my interview with Leo, my wife had stood on the back of the tent wagon with—as she said—“her knees rattling like castanets!” We now compared notes. It seemed that as Leo crouched to spring, the natives swarmed up near-by trees or on to the wagons, while the other two lions had returned on their tracks and had passed me in the full glow of the firelight! Our Airedale terrier had rushed out at them; there had been a bark and a yelp; then silence, and the dog had not returned!

While looking into those malevolent, compelling orbs, I had been impelled by an icy, subconscious control, issuing directions at lightning speed; and I had obeyed those directions like an automaton. Now, as I lay on top of the wagon with the immediate crisis passed, my hitherto paralyzed normal consciousness resumed control, and I mentally visualized what

might have been. Then I grew cold, and violently ill, and was obliged to climb off the wagon by an access of vomiting!

This was the picture which produced such a strange reaction.

The lion had had his teeth in the victim's throat, and his eyes turned downward until I fired; hence the light had not revealed him until he raised his head. It had been pure accident which led me to halt ten paces from him. Had I not seen the more distant pair I should have walked within his reach, and those razor-sharp talons would have disembowled me. Or again, a panic-stricken volte-face on my part as he revealed himself, or an instant's miscalculation in pressing the trigger, and I should have gone to earth with the killer upon my shoulders.

In either event my wife would have passed the night in the wagon, with my body lying twelve yards away; three lions among two hundred panic-stricken oxen; her dog dead; the natives helpless up the tree; and the nearest white man fifty miles away! That this had not happened was due to no conscious wisdom of my own, but solely to that subconscious control which had withheld this picture from me. The physical effects of the vision when it came, showed clearly the disaster it would have precipitated, had not imagination remained torpid during the crisis.

Asking myself why I had not foreseen the possi-

bility of the third lion, I remembered that it was the fact of the whole span—including Kruisman's yoke mate, Witfoot—not having retreated to the wagon, which had misled me. Witfoot, indeed, had stood looking down on the lion at his feet, crouched on the body of his mate. A phenomenon I would have sworn could not happen.

The explanation which occurred to me was that these cattle had been imported from a Southern Rhodesian farm, trained by myself, and that this was their first year on the road, and probably their first experience with lions.

I had always imagined that instinct impelled native cattle to stampede at the distant smell of a lion; but I now saw clearly that such instinct was merely mental impressions produced in youth by frequent contact with lions, or by observation of older cattle when the scent reached them, that instinct was, in fact, nothing more than transmitted experience, and without that experience instinct was inoperative.

Our dog had further exemplified this. He had never seen lions, and had rushed on destruction blindly. Numberless dogs I had seen, on the other hand, stop dead in their tracks at the faintest smell of the lion, drop tail and ears, and with a low uneasy growl, retreat behind me, thus emphasizing that danger was abroad. These dogs had invariably resided for years—or been born—in lion country. I

now saw that what I had loosely termed instinct was in their case also, only remembered or transmitted experience.

Reflecting on the unusual promptitude of Leo's attack, I concluded that with the light in his eyes he could not see me, as he could in the dark, and that to him the phenomenon would appear as the eye of a large animal approaching to rob him of his kill. I am satisfied that minus the lamp he would have hesitated to attack, and I resolved in future never to use it. A month later, I heard of a Captain Robinson being killed on the Kafue while shooting with a headlamp; and this confirmed my conclusion that where lions and leopards are concerned, a lamp is a danger to the user.

After an hour or two I dozed off, and about four o'clock was awakened by my wife whispering: "The lions are eating!" Listening, I heard sucking and gulping noises in the direction of the dead ox, and as my rifle bolt clicked, two pairs of eyes turned in my direction. Firing from the top of the wagon, I heard the soft rush of their departure; but I had been unable to see my sights, and did not hit them.

When day broke, we found they had secured one mouthful only, while the actual killer had not returned. Following the blood spoor we came to where he had lain in a patch of long grass all night, fifty yards from the kill. From the manner in which the

grass was flattened, and the quantity and frothy condition of the blood, it was evident that the soft-nosed bullet had badly damaged the lungs, and the pain of his wound had prevented his return to defend his meat.

As his trail led into ten-foot grass, and we had seven miles to go for water, I had neither time nor inclination to follow him; more especially as without a dog to warn us of his proximity, those flashing claws would undoubtedly claim as victim the first to come within reach.

The body of the terrier we found eighteen paces from where I had faced the lion, with his throat torn out by a single contemptuous sweep of power-driven talons. After silent burial of the canine here, we inspanned and pulled on.

From this time forward Leo was established in my mind as the king of night. The invisibility, swiftness and silence of his nocturnal appearances, impressed me more powerfully than his majestic shape, strength or vibrant voice, had ever done. I registered a silent hope that if ever a man-eater crossed my path it would be in daylight. For in the dark, I was convinced that the chances of a day-old chicken with an eagle-hawk, would be superior to my own!

CHAPTER VII

ADVENTURES IN ANGOLA

THREE years later, in Portuguese Angola, I put my phosphorescent sights to the test with excellent results. My wife and I were camped in a tent two hundred yards from cattle kraals containing two hundred head, when about two o'clock one morning we were disturbed by the stampede of the cattle. Breaking out of the kraals, the wise native-bred beasts made for the boys' huts, and there huddled together in the light of hastily replenished fires.

I was hurriedly dressing when a large ox dashed past the tent, with a panting, leaping form ten yards behind him. Next morning we found Leo, as usual, had covered only about eighty yards from the point where his spring was made, and we then relinquished pursuit. My passage to the kraals was as unattractive to me, as her enforced lonely vigil in the tent was to my wife, but I accomplished it safely.

I carefully reconnoitered the broken kraals, and suddenly noted two familiar dull plumes, low down in the bush beside the kraal. Leveling my rifle, I

steadied the luminous bead on the dark patch just below the gleam, and fired. A soft thud, followed by gasping, hard-drawn breath, and a tearing sound as vindictive talons sent the grass tufts whirling, told me that luck had directed the shot.

In the morning we found traces of three lions. Two had departed silently as they came: but the third lay silent for ever where my bullet had found him, with heart and lungs a shapeless mass. He was a small male with a very sparse red mane: but the fangs and claws he was equipped with revealed potentialities out of all proportion to the luxuries obtained with the thirty shillings his hide fetched!

On another occasion, while hunting between the Cuando and the Okavango, I used an old riding mule and about ten natives to scour the country ahead for game and water, before shifting my main camp. I usually tethered the mule with a long rein to a tree, and pitched my tent fly as close as convenient to it, usually about twenty yards away. To make the mule secure, I tied a lantern to a bough above him, and told the natives to sleep close by.

For a long time nothing happened, and then one night I was awakened by two native dogs trying to get between the iron stays of my X bed, to hide under it. Before I could express resentment in summary fashion, the natives crowded in behind them, whispering excitedly: "A lion has killed the mule, master!"

Proceeding cautiously over the intervening few yards, with rifle in hand, I was at last able to make out under the lantern light the spot lately occupied by the mule. There was nothing visible except a piece of broken riem hanging from the tree. Thinking he might have broken loose, with the lion in pursuit, I asked my head-boy if he was sure the mule was dead.

"Master," he replied, "it was something heavy hitting the ground which awoke us. When we looked we could see only the lion and the mule's legs kicking in the air. He is surely dead, and the lion has taken him away!"

We spent about half an hour getting a plentiful supply of grass and dry torches, and then moved gingerly in the direction the ground showed the lion to have taken. We had gone only about fifty yards when there came a hissing, vibrating snarl I knew well, and there—perhaps twenty yards ahead—was a pair of opalescent gleams, I knew for feline eyes.

There were a few patches of dry grass in the vicinity, and I told the natives to throw some torches into these and then retreat. This was hurriedly done, and in a few minutes the grass caught fire. By its light we saw Leo rise to his feet and glance uneasily at the flames. Then he gave a savage growl and seized the carcass of the mule preparatory to departing with his prey.

I had phosphorus on my sights, and sitting quickly down as he seized the carcass, I fired hastily. The bullet missed him, but caused him to drop his prey and look toward us. At my next shot he collapsed across his victim, and lay struggling unsuccessfully to rise. When he lay still, we cautiously approached and beat out the flames.

Then we found that my bullet had taken him in the throat and had broken the spinal column of the neck in its exit. A most fortunate shot; for a wounded lion in the dark is unpleasant company! As usual, the mule's neck had been twisted and broken before he could utter a sound; and in the half-hour we had taken to prepare the pursuit, the paunch had been ripped open, emptied and eaten, together with heart, lungs and liver. Truly, Leo is an expert killer and a quick feeder!

I have often rallied my natives on their appreciation of unwashed tripe, telling them that as they copy Leo's hunting methods when driving game, they have also copied his feeding methods! To them or to Leo, the idea of "burying" such a titbit—as mentioned by the writer formerly referred to—would seem more tragic than humorous!

On one occasion I sent eight large oxen, weighing about a thousand pounds each, and inspanned in a sleigh, to a friend twelve miles away. Next morning my driver returned, and told me that three lions had

attacked during the night. They had been driven off, but one ox had fought with them and was so badly mauled that he could not rise. I accompanied him to the scene of the attack, and found the ox—a big half-bred Africander—lying in ordinary bovine sleeping posture, with his legs tucked under him, but with muzzle stretched out along the ground, and breathing stertorously.

He had always been a combative beast, and was extremely powerful. Not being caught unawares he had put up a magnificent battle, as the claw marks on neck and shoulder, belly, muzzle and flank, showed. All three lions had attempted to bring him down. No doubt the native's intervention saved him, but the blood-stains on one horn, and on the lion's spoor, showed that one of the attackers at least, carried a wound four inches deep!

It was nearly eighteen hours after the attack when I reached him, and already the muzzle was swollen to the size of a football; while on pressing the claw-marked skin with my fingers, a crackling feeling showed that all was not well with the flesh underneath. A merciful bullet ended his sufferings, and on examination the flesh under the claw marks showed as a huge area of purple-black jelly—especially on the belly—similar to that caused by snake bite.

I remembered the death of a white hunter in this district a few years earlier, who had been found by

his friend with the body of the lioness he had stabbed to death, lying across him, and how many of us had marveled that with his body so frightfully lacerated that movement was impossible, he had yet talked calmly, and without apparent suffering, for twenty minutes before he died.

Looking now at the flesh of the ox, so quickly mortified as to be impervious to sensation, it seemed probable that the poisonous fangs and talons do indeed bring quick insensibility to pain, as some scientists assert. But men who have been mauled are usually emphatic in their assertion that "it hurt most damnably!"

The foregoing incidents furnish ample evidence that Leo is not afraid of fire when prey is in sight. Here is one which proves that he is not afraid of water either! A friend of mine had his camp on the Quando pitched on a high promontory overlooking a backwater of that river. One night six lions stampeded his cattle out of the kraal, and they dashed past his hut with the lions in pursuit. Two of his trained trek oxen jumped off the thirty-foot-high promontory into the deep water of the lagoon, and without hesitation two of the lions followed, clung to them until they reached the bank, and there killed them.

My friend was an old hunter, wise in the ways of King Leo, and next day he shot one of the tawny dacoits, and scientifically poisoned certain portions of

the carcasses. A week later, a well-known Australian hunter arrived, and was less surprised to see the six skulls, and dressed skins of the troop, than at the evidence the ground still showed of their determined pursuit into the backwater. Like myself, he found stories of lions swimming deep and wide rivers more credible henceforth!

CHAPTER VIII

TWO MAN-EATERS

Two instances of man-eating which show the effrontery of the species—and which may be taken as typical—may be used to conclude these stories of King Leo. On the first occasion I was not present, though I knew the victim well afterward. The incident occurred during the construction of the railway between Broken Hill in Northern Rhodesia, and the Katanga border.

My friend was employed on the construction and occupied a tent close to several others, sharing it with several mongrel dogs. One night he went to sleep with his hand outside the blankets, and in the dead of night he was awakened by the pain of its seizure by savage teeth. He awoke to find a huge lion standing beside his stretcher, and to resist being pulled off the bed he thrust the other hand against the lion's head.

This also, was promptly seized and crushed; but his cries of pain and terror had awakened the camp, and at the commotion and sudden flare of light from

hastily replenished fires, the lion released him and decamped. As he did so, he received a bullet from another European hastening to the rescue.

Next morning the whole camp turned out in pursuit, and owing to the lucky shot in the night, they soon found the lion and killed him. The dogs had slunk out of the tent without a whimper of warning, at the scent of the lion's approach, and the mate of the injured man shot them all in revenge.

My friend was never able to use his hands again, for even the slightest purpose, but regarded himself as lucky to be still alive! The points which I found of greatest interest were the appalling audacity of the lion in passing numerous sleeping natives and camp-fires, to enter an enclosure which to the ordinary lion would appear as a trap, and the stealthy silence of his attack! The action of the dogs, too, showed the futility of expecting canine protection against the soft-stepping, death-dealing lords of night!

While traveling in Angola by night with cattle, I arrived one morning at a small river, to find a gang of native carriers in a state of great excitement and showing no disposition to prepare for the usual morning march. Inquiries elicited the information that one of their number had been carried off during the night by a lion.

There had been thirty carriers, and they had been sleeping in a row two by two, with a small fire be-

tween each pair. Few Angola natives possess blankets, and they remedy the deficiency by sleeping in this fashion.

During the night, the native on the inner side of the end fire had been awakened by a violent kick in the face, and had sprung up to see his mate on the other side—the extreme outside man of the line—being carried off by a lion. The beast had seized him by the head and shoulders as he lay, and there had been no outcry. His kicking legs as he was lifted, had caught his mate and awakened him. But for that accident his disappearance would have remained undiscovered until morning!

Naturally there had been no more sleep, and the natives were debating when we arrived, whether to follow the lion with their assegais, or to content themselves with reporting the matter to the first official en route. I agreed to go after the renegade, and set off with ten of the party and a few of my own boys.

Less than a mile from the bivouac we found the skull and feet of the victim. These and one shin bone were all the man-eater had left, and the tooth marks in the skull showed that he had seized the boy as described. Three miles farther on, we came to a patch of long grass and undergrowth, in which stood several tall ant-heaps. Knowing how likely a lair this was, I told the natives to surround and throw sticks into it, while making all the noise they could.

They did this, and suddenly there came a yell on my right, about forty yards away. I looked round to see a native rolling over and over on the ground and screaming, while yards beyond, a large yellow-maned lion was making off at a sweeping trot. I sighted hastily and fired, and with lightning speed the great beast whirled in his tracks, coming toward me with tremendous bounds, and open mouth snarling savage menace. I dropped to a sitting posture as he turned, and aimed between his forelegs as he rose in a bound. He seemed to crumple in mid-air, and dropped to earth, but almost instantly he regained his feet and headed at a trot into the cover he had left.

Then we took counsel, and decided to fire the grass simultaneously on all sides. This we did, and when the fire died down we found the blackened and charred body of the man-eater fifty yards inside the edge of the cover. He had evidently died before the fire reached him, as there was a bullet through the lungs which had smashed several ribs in its exit, besides one in the fleshy part of the quarters, which had probably induced the charge.

The native I had heard screaming was more frightened than hurt. He had been stooping to pick up a stick as the lion broke cover, and—unfortunately for himself—had been almost in the beast's path. He had received a stroke from one paw which had torn his buttocks severely, but was not seriously



LION GOING FOR A DRINK

injured. So on this occasion I found that even a man-eater may be turned from his charge by steady shooting; in daylight at any rate.

In the episodes here related I have described the incidents exactly as they occurred, since close acquaintance with Leo has convinced me that it is criminal to create false impressions in the minds of those who may one day meet him for the first time. Many a life has been lost in first meetings with lions, elephants, buffalo and rhinoceros, solely on account of ill-advised action due to fabulous tales narrated to cater to an appetite for the marvelous.

In daylight the hunting lion resigns his kingship. He is minus the faculty of perfect eyesight and dazed with sunlight and heavy slumber. He is the hunted animal, and odds are with the confident, straight-shooting hunter. Nevertheless, at close quarters, at bay, wounded, or in long grass, the hunter must walk warily, for there is always the element of surprise. What a hundred lions have done in those circumstances is no guarantee of what the hundred and first will do!

But at night the position is reversed, no matter the express rifle. The hunter is then but an insect, without strength, sight, smell, hearing, or speed, and he is pitted against a monarch full-armed and arrogant, and possessing all these in excelsis. This should be remembered, if he would win and *live*!

PART TWO

GIANTS OF FOREST, PLAIN AND RIVER

CHAPTER I

TWO DAYS WITH GRAY GIANTS

IT HAS always been an open question among hunters whether the lion, elephant, rhinoceros or buffalo, should be entitled "king of beasts." Each bases his candidate's claim on man-killing capacity. To me this has always seemed illogical. The mamba and the cobra are remarkably efficient as man-killers, but none has ever claimed kingship for either! It would seem that human egotism induces man to seek consolation for defeat by exalting the animals he hunts. By exalting those which most frequently defeat him!

Apart from danger to the hunter, however, and fully recognizing that there is no supreme ruler among animals, the elephant is undoubtedly "king" of the forest. No animal that lives can attack him successfully; neither dense bush nor great rivers can stay his progress; and speed, strength, wisdom and courage he possesses in abundance.

Sixteen years ago I embarked on my first elephant hunt in company with an Irish-American and one of those "bad boys" a reputable English family sometimes exiles for its greater peace of mind. This was in a district very close to the Katanga border. Leaving camp at daybreak, we found fresh spoor at a "pan" a few miles away, and the Irish-American—whom I will call Jack Murphy—gave his opinion that the beasts had left the pan after midnight.

This he deduced from the fact that there were dew traces on the under side of leaves broken off by the elephants, and as dew had not formed until after midnight, these must have been broken off after that hour. The spoor showed that three bulls had drunk, and that two were exceptionally large ones, likely to be worth following for the ivory they carried.

The natives named a pan forty miles away on the route the elephants had taken, as being the next water. We were probably six hours behind the gray giants, but as there were several feeding-grounds en route, we hoped to come up with them long before they reached the pan.

For having drunk during the night, elephants will usually stay on feeding-grounds and sleep during the hot hours. Their journeys to water are made at night—especially when far away—and once headed on that quest they will cover sixty miles without pause, in about ten hours if necessary.

We had traveled about ten miles, when one of our three native water carriers gave a startled yell and sprang aside, letting fall the calabash of water from his head to the ground. Wheeling swiftly, we three white men were just in time to see our head-boy raise the shotgun he carried, and blow the head off a vicious-looking green mamba, which hung suspended from the branch under which the water carrier had almost passed.

This incident was unfortunate, not only on account of the lost water, but because we feared the gunshot might alarm the "phunts," if they were anywhere within two miles. For although nearly blind, they are wonderfully keen of scent and hearing.

Our fears were unfortunately justified. A mile farther on, we found the spoor diverged from the broad trail we followed, and wound aimlessly hither and yon amid the trees. Yet not aimlessly, for bark with the sap still wet hung in strips from the trees, and tall saplings broken off short, showed that the elephants had fed upon their leaf-crowned tops within the hour.

On every side, too, were broken trees and saplings, and peeled-off bark, dead, and dried, and old, proving that this was a favorite feeding-ground of the forest kings. For, despite assertions to the contrary, elephants are wasteful feeders. A wide range and a specialized diet immunize them from the hunger

which teaches economy! Of the bulls we followed, there was no sign; but a mile farther on we found their tracks on the elephant trail again; while longer strides and deeper depressions, showed an accelerated pace.

Jack cursed with heart-felt fluency and said: "We pay for that damned shot with another thirty miles of walking before dark. What do you chaps say? Go on, or go back?"

"Bad-boy" Ted Morgan answered: "If my bank balance were a little more robust, I'd say go back! But it's very anemic at present, and 'money from home' is still six weeks away! I vote for the ivory."

With this I agreed, as my own balance was defunct, and "money from home" never came my way. So we proceeded, but it was three weary and exhausted men who arrived at the "Malundi" pan that night in the starlight, and our six boys were in little better case. Having taken water and washed, we retired two miles into the forest and camped, making a meal of dry bread, biltong and water. This and one blanket was all the impedimenta Jack allowed each of us on the elephant trails.

Ten miles before reaching the pan, the spoor of the bulls had turned into the forest, but we were bound to push on for water, and we knew that sooner or later they would come to the pan. It was the following night before they did so, and had I not shot a sable five miles away, we should have slept with

empty stomachs on the second night, for, naturally, we dare not shoot near the water.

During that second night, shrill trumpeting in the direction of the water told us that more than our three bulls had arrived there. On examination at dawn, we found that a small herd, including cows and calves, had watered during the night. They had gone in a direction opposite to our home camp, but we stuck grimly to the trail, and this time we were more fortunate.

About noon, Jack caught my arm and pointed ahead, at the same time motioning the natives to halt. Peering through the trees I discerned a motionless gray shadow about a hundred yards ahead, then another and another, until I could count six. Then Jack whispered: "Wait here while I scout around and place the herd!"

With two of the natives he disappeared silently among the trees, and for nearly an hour we saw him at intervals appearing and disappearing among the trees, as he progressed noiselessly in a wide circle ahead of the elephants in front of us. When at last he returned, he said: "I have counted twelve, all ahead of us, and the wind is in our favor. But the big bulls are on the other side of those six cows you can see. We must pass them to get at the bulls. Risky, but it can't be helped!"

Following him silently with two of the natives,

we at last outflanked the cows and four half-grown calves beyond them, finally discerning the sleeping bulls on the farther edge of the herd, standing from thirty to eighty yards apart. Halting me about thirty paces from the nearest, Jack said: "When I raise my rifle above my head, aim at the height of the shoulder, but a foot or more behind it; count ten and then fire. When they stampede, don't move!"

Then he took up a position about the same distance from the center bull, while Ted Morgan worked his way over to the right. Standing with taut nerves waiting for the signal, I surveyed the mighty bulk ahead of me, and my rifle seemed a puny weapon to deal death to such a giant! Perhaps no more than five minutes elapsed before the signal came, but to me it seemed hours. Then Jack's rifle went aloft, and I concentrated all my attention on the matter in hand.

But I had only reached eight in my mental count, when the report of a rifle shattered the echoes—Ted Morgan's as it transpired later—and without more ado I pulled trigger just as the great bulk ahead started into life, and a huge trunk whirled skyward. It was lucky I did so, for five seconds later I was too paralyzed by the infernal cacophony to move.

The silent forest had suddenly become a pandemonium; the air vibrated with furious screams and trumpetings; well-grown trees and saplings crashed to earth in all directions, as they collapsed before the

impact of the giants' rush; while the earth beneath me shook and trembled under the thunder of the living avalanche, before which the forest seemed to bow in all directions. Jack's advice not to move seemed superfluous. I wished ardently to do so, and that swiftly. But to me it seemed that the forest was filled with furious, crashing forms, and there seemed no avenue of escape from that living cyclone.

So I stood dazed and breathless, and prayed that the spot I stood upon might not be in the gray giants' path. Amid the uproar I noted two rifle shots, but these I heard only dimly. I was merely conscious of gigantic, screaming forms, whirling past me, to the accompaniment of crashing trees and bush. Then, as the tempest of sound receded, a hand fell on my shoulder, and Jack's voice said: "Wake up, lad! Don't let the rumpus scare you! Give me a hand with Ted. He's hurt!"

A hundred yards away Ted Morgan lay groaning, and on examination we found his right leg and two ribs broken. It appeared that a cow directly in his rear had charged upon him before he perceived her presence, and although Jack had placed two heart shots, she had seized Morgan in her trunk, and whirled him aloft before she fell. Lacking strength to smash him utterly, his impact with a tree as he fell had effected the damage described.

With two rifles, and strips torn from blankets, we

made rough splints, and the fractures being simple, we were able to land him in a Belgian hospital a week later, without complications. But he kept a permanent limp as souvenir, and as far as I know, my first elephant hunt was also Ted's last. The bull he had fired at was found by natives a week later, fifty miles away, but the other two we found before sunset, within three miles: while the cow lay dead a few yards from where she had dropped Morgan.

We buried over three hundred pounds' weight of ivory that night by starlight, and three weeks later, the manager of a certain firm accompanied Jack and me on a "shooting trip," and bought it as it lay, for one hundred sixty pounds, plus eighty pounds for the bull the native had recovered.

The second day I will describe, occurred some years later, and gave even greater thrills, though by that time I was more hardened to the uproar of the panic-driven herd. Their trumpeting awakened us from sleep, and my friend Ben—a long, lean Australian—looked at his watch and said: "Half past two! They will have two hours' and a half start of us, but we must be after them at dawn!"

At dawn we started along the broad elephant path, with two boys carrying water-bags and some dried meat; while ten others followed a mile behind with their own food and our blankets. For an hour we marched in silence, for there is something in the hush

of the forest at dawn which forbids speech—an atmosphere like that of a great cathedral.

We were not religious men—in fact, many would have termed us wicked—but we felt that speech was something grotesque; and for that first hour no word was spoken. Then as the sunlight dispersed the last shadows, and revealed each leaf and twig in golden brightness, restraint departed with the gods of night, and speech became again the interpreter of the senses.

Halting, Ben exclaimed: “Wait a moment, and let’s see what the prospects are!”

After examination of the broad shallow depressions in the path, he carefully measured two of them and then remarked: “A herd of nine or ten, with one large and two average bulls, the biggest carrying over sixty pounds. In all probability the herd we followed a week ago!”

Ben had a formula based on experience, according to which he calculated the weight of ivory by measuring the size of the spoor, and he was seldom more than five pounds off in his calculations.

“In that case,” I replied, “I only hope we have better luck than we had before!”

“I hope so,” Ben agreed. “They have cost us two hundred and forty miles of walking already, and it’s time we collected some reward!”

Ben was a “left-over” from Boer War days. Hard as tempered steel—physically and mentally—a

splendid shot, and utterly reckless, he found anything less than five thousand square miles of solitude too limited for the scope of his activities!

Hour after hour we tramped steadily forward along the broad trail; while as the sun climbed higher, the heat became almost overpowering, even in the forest shadows. Water had to be used sparingly, for the elephants had headed for a pan forty-five miles away, and there was none en route. At midday a halt was called for a half-hour, and a few gulps of water taken from the bag the native carried; then onward again over sand that seemed red-hot in spite of thick boots!

Speed was essential, for during the last few miles broken saplings and torn-down branches had shown where the elephants had stopped to feed, and it was during these hottest hours of the day that we hoped to find them resting.

About three in the afternoon, Ben suddenly seized my arm and pointed ahead, whispering: "Steady, partner, we're on them!"

Wiping the sweat from my eyes, I followed my comrade's pointing finger, and in the shade of a great tree a hundred yards ahead, discerned a dim gray patch. So motionless was the shadow, that it might well have been mistaken for one of the huge ant-heaps so common in the Katanga forests. But we knew better, and knew, too, that our success—per-

haps our lives—depended on our caution. The air was almost motionless, but collecting a handful of fine sand, Ben allowed it to trickle slowly through his fingers. As it fell, it indicated that what wind there was, was from the herd toward us. This was lucky; for the sense of smell compensates these great beasts for very defective eyesight, and is abnormally developed.

Approaching cautiously to within fifty yards, the gray patch was revealed as a mighty bull sleeping in the shade, as he stood facing us. From where we stood we could count four other gray shapes a little farther along the trail, beyond the great bull. With his mouth at my ear, Ben whispered: "There are nine all told. One big bull is over to your right. Move over in position to shoot, while I get this chap to turn broadside on. Signal me how many you can see. Don't leave any behind you to get your wind. I'll signal when to shoot!"

I nodded and moved quietly in the direction indicated, where another gray shadow was discernible about fifty yards away. Ben meanwhile moved cautiously to within thirty yards of the towering form ahead. Then he whispered to his native: "Turn him to the left!"

Knowing what was required, the boy moved away about ten yards, picking up a handful of dry twigs as he went. Then he halted and broke a twig in his

fingers. At the soft snapping sound, two great ears moved forward and remained spread. The king of the forest was listening. Moving noiselessly onward, the native halted abreast of the big bull, and about forty yards from him. Then he snapped another twig and stood motionless. Slowly the mighty beast turned to his right, and stood straining intently to catch any telltale movement, as he faced in the direction of the sound.

This maneuver brought the left side facing Ben, and gave him the sought-for target of the lungs. He knew well enough the risk of attempting from the front to penetrate that enormous mass of bone, to the comparatively small brain behind it. The small depression in the chest, through which a road to the heart might be found, was hidden by the pendent trunk.

As the leviathan of the solitudes now stood, the brain might be reached from a spot midway between eye and ear. But the line was an imaginary one, the brain only the size of a Rugby football, and protected as it was by solid bone on either side, Ben—like myself—preferred the great expanse of the lungs, unless the forward position of the leg gave opportunity for a heart shot, the heart being half covered by the shoulder when standing normally.

As I lifted and dropped my hand three times, Ben glanced toward me. He understood that I had

counted three more of the herd, bringing the total to eight, and leaving one unaccounted for.

Deciding to trust to luck that the missing beast was not in our rear, and hence down-wind, Ben gave the signal to shoot, by lifting his rifle to his shoulder and then lowering it again, looking meanwhile toward me. I waved my hand in token of understanding, and we both leveled our rifles and took careful aim behind the shoulder. To give me time, Ben dwelt on his aim until I fired, but as my .450 express woke the echoes, the report of his 11m in Mauser almost synchronized, and the reports sounded as one.

In an instant the echoes of the shots were drowned in a very inferno of sound, and the drowsy solitudes leapt to tremendous, crashing, pulsating life. A chorus of trumpeted screams, a crashing of bush and trees as they yielded to the shock of great bodies, and as the gray shapes swept up-wind, the very air they displaced seemed to strike us with a swirling rush.

Time was—as I have recorded—when this sudden incarnation of power and fury would have left me white and shaking; as a man might well be who heard half a dozen express trains converging on the spot where he stood, and reducing every obstacle in their path to nothingness. But those days were past. Even as the big bull Ben had aimed at raised his trunk in a reverberating scream of rage, his rifle bolt drove another cartridge home, and as the huge foreleg

moved in its first forward stride, a bullet entered through the "armpit" it exposed. But as though untouched, the leader of the herd swept onward and away from him.

Meanwhile, I placed a second bullet in the animal I had fired at, and then concentrated anxious attention on my rear. It was lucky that I did so, for from behind a dense clump of saplings the missing animal—a young bull—broke cover, and charged directly down upon me from about fifty yards away. Hastily I sent two bullets through the chest the up-curved trunk exposed, while the roar of Ben's Mauser came from my left as the bull swerved to the diagonal heart shot he had sent in. Then I heard his voice crying: "Run, lad! To my left!"

And run I did.

As the infuriated animal swerved again after me, Ben sent in another shot. There was a slight stumble, a hesitating recovery, and the young bull headed off again in a stumbling pursuit of the herd.

"Phew! A near thing!" I gasped, as I reached my friend. "Lucky you turned him!"

"He's got it good!" Ben answered. "He will not go far. Nor will the big fellow I fired at. What about your bull?"

"I don't know," I answered. "I got in two shots but he went up-wind with the others!"

Five minutes later we took up the trail of the

herd, after sending one native to follow up the young bull which had so nearly ended my career, and which with four bullets in him, we knew would not go far.

There was no trouble in following the herd. Keeping the direction of the elephant path along which, when undisturbed, they travel in single file to water, the great beasts were now traveling abreast through the bush; and broken trees and saplings and flattened grass clearly revealed their furious passage. We had gone about two miles when the native halted and whispered: "They stand!"

Approaching closer, we perceived the reason for the halt. The great bull Ben had fired at had reached the limit of his endurance and stood supported on either side by two others, somewhat smaller than himself. Leaning their powerful shoulders against their stricken comrade, these aided his desperate efforts to retain his feet. But even *their* great strength was of no avail. Even as we watched, the huge knees bent under him, and he crashed helplessly forward and rolled over.

One of his two assistants was obviously the bull I had wounded; but just as obviously, he was still strong, and full of "going." So we moved quietly forward to include him in the "bag." Then a stick snapped underfoot, and with incredible swiftness the two bulls wheeled in our direction.

As though on a signal, the cows came into line,

seven trunks lifted skyward simultaneously, and just as the native called: "Look out, master, they're going to fight!" with a rending scream of rage, the seven colossal figures charged down upon our puny forms. For we both felt in that instant as a beetle might in the shadow of a great boot!

But Ben's innate recklessness surged uppermost, and shouting to the boy: "Run, Mutaka! We stand!" he aimed at the chest of the center bull, shouting in my ear: "Plug number three from the left as fast as you can!"

While I worked my bolt frantically, sending bullet after bullet into this animal—which proved later to be the one I had originally fired at—Ben's Mauser roared beside me, and at twenty paces his target stumbled and leaned heavily against the bull on his right, already stumbling from the effects of my fire. He in turn bore against the two cows on *his* right; those on the left of the center closed in; and like a troop of soldiers wheeling on the "center guide" on parade, the herd swung to their right into the forest, the flank animal passing within ten paces of where we stood!

Calling the native, Ben walked to the great leader which had first fallen. As we surveyed the mighty bulk, he said: "Tusks nearer seventy than sixty I think; and the other two are not far away!"

Mutaka had taken refuge in an ant-bear hole, and

now emerged looking nearer gray than black! To him Ben said: "Mutaka, call the other natives. Send four after us with axes, and the rest of you chop out these tusks. We will camp here to-night, and get the young bull's ivory to-morrow as we go home. Be careful with the water. We shall all have but little to-night!"

We then followed the direction taken by the herd, and had gone perhaps a mile when a huge gray mound showed where another forest monarch had fallen. Half a mile farther, and we found the second bull—my original target.

Presently the natives arrived and the tusks were chopped out. While this was being done, Ben examined the bull I had shot. Taking his knife he removed a piece of the hide over the lungs, and then showed me in the palm of his hand a few strips of nickel, remarking: "Here are the remains of your first shots! They never reached the lungs; but stayed just under the hide; splintered like soft-nose! If you continue to use that ammunition you will be killed one day. The firm which skimped the nickel for extra profit should in that case be tried for manslaughter, *but they won't be!*"

"No!" I agreed. "Nor will they make good the ivory we lose through the cursed stuff. I am English and have always used English stuff; but I think in self-defense I must use American or German in

GRAY GIANTS



future! With the ivory-buying sharks on one side, and the swindling ammunition firms on the other, I begin to wonder if the game is worth the candle?"

"Perhaps not in one way," he agreed, "but the game is worth something in itself, you know. The two minutes we lived through an hour ago were an experience a millionaire could not buy!"

"Maybe very few would desire that experience!" I retorted dryly. "What do you estimate the weight at?"

"About three hundred and fifty," he answered.

"And for that," I commented, "we have walked three hundred miles—including the journey back—and both risked our lives!"

"That's right," he agreed. "One hundred miles for each elephant is a fair average in these days. They're not as plentiful as in Selous's time, you know! And risking one's life teaches one not to get conceited about the value of it!"

And indeed, to follow the gray giants is a princely, if poorly paid sport. The risk of sudden death is ever present. The thrill of danger, the hundreds of miles of walking, the hunger, hardship and thirst, give a zest to life, and a prideful efficiency to mind and body. But I raise my hat to the late Captain Selous, and those others who pursued it with muzzle-loading weapons on foot. Their toil may have been less, and the reward greater, but all they got was earned!

Darkness had fallen when we returned to the big bull, and settled down to an uncomfortable night. As we lay with weary limbs outstretched on the yielding sand, Ben overheard Mutaka describing the charge to the other natives, and expressing his belief that we should one day be killed.

Calling him over, Ben asked: "Why do you think I shall one day be killed, Mutaka?"

"Master, the elephant people are wise. For him who kills but seldom they do not seek. But you kill many. Soon the word will go forth in their councils, and the strongest and bravest will seek you; and you will one day be killed!"

Remembering the long list of expert hunters overwhelmed at last by the mad charge, for once my reckless friend forbore to laugh. Perhaps he suspected truth in Mutaka's words.

CHAPTER II

ADVENTURES IN HIPPO HAUNTS

IN MOST large rivers north of Mafeking, hippopotami are still found in more or less abundance, being especially plentiful in the less traveled waterways. For like most animals, the hippo seeks to avoid mankind, although his thick hide and his nocturnal habits render him more or less immune to attack by natives, unequipped with modern firearms. Like other wild creatures, too, he feeds only at night; remaining invisible on the river bottoms by day.

Only during the cold months of June and July may he be found on terra firma by daylight. During those months—when the water is very cold—he will seek a sandy island, or shady bank, where he can lie and bask in the sun until near midday. But always he faces the stream, and the slightest alarm is the signal for a mighty splash, and his swift disappearance.

Just as the rhinoceros is rendered immune from the leonine killer of the forest, by his hide, horns and strength, so can the hippo alone defy the killer of the

waters—the voracious crocodile—by virtue of nearly the same attributes. Nevertheless, the cow with a calf keeps wary watch over the youngster, usually placing it in a shallow backwater, and guarding the entrance. Many an unlucky boat has been capsized while passing such backwaters, and the occupants obliged to swim for their lives, my own among the number.

I was traveling on the lower Quindo when it happened, in search of boys. In spite of native protests I had insisted on going by river. The afternoon was sunny and peaceful, and the river apparently destitute of life, when there was a violent shock, and my bow paddler took an unpremeditated dive into the stream. My rifle was lying beside me, and I just had time to grab it before I followed.

The rest of my equipment went to the bottom, while my other two boys half jumped, and were half hurled, into the reeds bordering the stream. What was worse, was the miserable night which followed; for it took us until nearly noon next day to negotiate the eight miles of swamp between us and the mainland. The dark hours we spent—wet, hungry and shivering—on a patch of damp mud in a clump of reeds!

That was a sentry cow's unpleasant way of expressing resentment at our intrusion. Yet it might have been worse. Often in such circumstances, canoe

travelers have been drowned, pulled under by crocodiles, or killed by the enraged hippo! On broad rivers like the Zambesi and Kafue, few accidents are occasioned by hippo: partly because their breadth enables the boats to keep at a safe distance, and partly because the hippo have learned to fear rifle shots, and avoid the track of traveling barges. Moreover, on these broad streams, the banks are usually firm, and a landing can be effected if necessary.

But on rivers like the Cuando, Lungwebungu, Quito and Okavango, the stream may run through a swamp from ten to twenty miles wide, where scarcity of landing-places, and an abundance of crocodiles, makes the passage to land perilous in the extreme. Nevertheless, some years ago, a cow hippo attacked a large steel barge—loaded with grain—on the Kafue and drove her tusks through the bottom plates so that there was barely time to reach the bank before it sank!

Many of the large wooden barges on the Zambesi, too, bear the marks of encounters with hippo, and on at least one occasion a cow placed her forefeet on the side of a large barge and upset it, the occupants only escaping by swimming! On the whole, however, the hippo is not pugnacious, and on the traveled routes he grows more shy and elusive as the years go by. On some rivers disgusted hunters say: "He is growing so civilized that he can almost read and write!"

Since he has a dental equipment that can bite a man in half with ease, perhaps it is just as well—for the man!

On every river where hippo are plentiful, passages through the reeds to the firm ground beyond will be found at intervals, and it is through these that he emerges after dark to his feeding-grounds. Generally there is plenty of short grass in the vicinity, and however rank this may be, it seems to satisfy his gastronomic requirements. The amount the breed consumes at an "all night sitting" is tremendous, and involves constant travel in search of fresh feeding-grounds.

Some years ago—before the present restrictions were imposed—there was a very successful Greek hunter on the Zambesi, who devoted himself solely to the pursuit of hippo, and hunted always at night. Within five years he made considerably over two thousand pounds. But to my mind, it was not "easy money." He earned every cent of it!

One night I went with him to study his methods. Later, when he had removed to the Cuando, I often went out with him. On the first occasion he proceeded as follows: During the day he had marked down a feeding-ground where the spoor showed that it was still in use. About sundown we took up a position in the reeds, in one of the runways giving access to it from the river, wading in knee-deep in mud.

Soon after sunset, a deep laughing grunt—a sonorous “*Ha, ha, ha*”—signified the approach of a bull. Within a few minutes this was answered by an equine snort—a sound as of a gigantic horse blowing through his lips and nostrils—which always distinguishes the cow. She, indeed, justifies the name “river-horse,” rather than the Dutch term of “sea-cow.”

During the next half-hour two more hippo appeared, and the little school swam within twenty yards of our hiding-place. Though it was nearly dark, we could see them rising and submerging at short intervals; the twitching of the short ears, and the huge, red, cavernous mouths opening as they indulged in vocal exercises; followed by the clash of tusks as they snapped playfully at one another.

But my companion would not shoot. He preferred, he said, that the hippo should bring his own vast bulk ashore, since, if shot in the water, he would be obliged to search for it on a down-stream sandbar, and perhaps to hire a span of native oxen to haul it to the bank. Two tons or so of weight is not easy to manhandle! I admitted the wisdom of patience, but although the July cold was intense after sunset, the mosquitoes were very active. Between the misery of cold feet and stinging mosquito bites, I concluded that however profitable hippo-hunting might be, it emphatically was not pleasant!

It was quite dark, and must have been after eight o'clock, before a sudden upheaval in the water close by told us that our amphibious quarry had at last decided it was his dinner-time. A few minutes later came the crash of reeds, the squelching of mud and water, and a huge black mass obscured the starlit gloom of the passage. Seconds later, the great dripping body swayed the reeds about us, and as he passed, our rifles spoke together. Mine, at least, almost touched his shoulder as I fired! There was a stumbling rush and a heavy sliding fall followed by snorts and plunges in the river, which showed that two of his companions, at any rate, had landed as we fired, and had now beaten a hasty retreat.

Since the carcass was invulnerable to lions, hyenas and crocodiles, we left it there and returned to camp for supper. But my indefatigable companion was not finished yet with his night's work. Two miles up the river there was an island where he said we were certain to find the survivors grazing. I did not know then that natives said of this man: "He speaks the hippo tongue!" So I foolishly bet him a sovereign that he would not find them. As a matter of fact, the wish was father to the thought, for my bed looked more attractive than a cold and speculative river journey!

Yet next morning there was a dead bull on the island, and he had won his sovereign! I have since

heard of his leaving camp at two A.M. after making a wager of five pounds that he would find and kill hippo before morning light and with invariable success! He was a specialist in hippo haunts and habits, the only one I ever met. The only man, too, in my experience, who could persuade natives to go on the river with him after dark. Most white men prefer to hunt in sunshine, unattended by mosquitoes, while natives as a rule give the river a wide berth after sundown.

In narrow swampy rivers, it is useless to shoot hippo unless one desires adventure. Thrills and danger one will get in plenty, but seldom hide or fat. Such rivers are deep and narrow throughout, and when the carcass rises, it travels at the speed of the current—sometimes fifteen or twenty miles during the night. Where there are shallows or rapids—as on the Zambesi—the carcass may be found at leisure, and hauled ashore. In backwaters and lagoons, of course, it rises and remains stationary, the only difficulty being in the landing of it.

During the cold months, as much as two hundred pounds of fat may be obtained from a single hippo, this being spread evenly over the body under the hide. But when in poor condition and in the hot weather, I have found as little as ten pounds on a large hippo!

The time taken by the body to rise, after death, seems to be governed by the condition of the stomach

contents. When these are fully digested, as long as fifteen or twenty hours may elapse after shooting, before the carcass floats. But when shot in the early morning, after a night's feeding, I have known them to rise after one or two hours, or even less! One can never be certain, of course, of the time of death. When the hippo sinks—apparently killed instantaneously—it is still possible that he may survive under water for a few hours; so that the time from death to reappearance must always be a matter of guesswork.

I have tried to shoot hippo at night when feeding, with an acetylene lamp attached to my helmet; but instead of standing to gaze at the light—as do most wild creatures—the hippo at once plunged for the river long before I could get near enough to see him. A friend of mine was successful by using a powerful electric light, and training a native to switch this on suddenly at close quarters. At the sudden blaze in his close vicinity the beast would stand long enough for aiming purposes. The best method, however, is to use luminous sights. After wading through miles of mosquito-haunted swamp, it is extremely irritating to lose the game.

Although discomfort takes the place of danger when shooting at night on shore, the night hunter runs less risk of tragedy and makes more certain of his kill. Let me describe two of the occasions when my Greek friend was forced by ill-success at night,

to embrace the daylight method. These were on the Quando River, after increasing restrictions had driven him from the Zambesi.

While the shadows of passing night and coming day dispute dominion, a small black dugout breaks through a steaming blanket of mist, curling upward from dark, greasy-looking waters that run sluggishly between banks of tall reeds. At bow and stern are two black figures, kneeling with long paddles in hand. Seated amidships is a pale-faced, bearded European, with rifle in hand and muzzle pointing to the sky; while his keen eyes peer through the mist at the lane of black water ahead.

The dugout progresses no faster than the two-mile-an-hour current, for the natives are not paddling. There is no need for hurry. The white man hopes to meet and kill a hippo, and one part of the stream is as likely as another for that purpose. During the night he has heard from his camp—two miles from where we meet him—the deep grunt of a bull, and the snort of at least one cow. He hopes to find them lying up in the swamp on some island, or to intercept their retreat to the river.

It is July, and very cold, and our friend knows well the hippo habit at such seasons. He has been unlucky lately. The unusually high floods this year have interfered with his silent approach in the darkness. His coffee and sugar are almost gone, and un-

less he can send in some fat and hide to the township (two hundred miles away) he must sell some of his cattle at a loss, or be reduced to native diet. Hence he has risked the dangers of the river.

A capsized canoe means at the least a three-mile amphibious journey to the land, through crocodile-infested swamps waist deep, the loss of his boat and, perhaps, his rifle. At the worst it may mean being bitten in half by enormous tusks, or being pulled under by crocodiles. The natives appreciate this as fully as he. That they are here at all, is due partly to fear of the white man, and partly to confidence in his known nerve and skill. For although lame, he is as swift and active as a cat, a certain shot, and knows not the meaning of fear.

Suddenly, a low sibilant hiss from the bow native, as he clutches frantically at the reeds and holds the canoe stationary, and a rusty brown shape slides through the reeds ten yards in front and disappears with a mighty splash into the stream.

As the natives clutch the reeds, the white man springs erect with rifle at shoulder, but the fraction of time available is too short for a shot. He remains erect, however, watching the dark water through the open sights of his rifle. Suddenly a great head, with small twitching ears, breaks water fifty yards ahead, looking toward the boat. Only a second does it remain, but to the practised eye that is enough.

As it sinks slowly, and the ears reach water level, a bullet crashes to the brain. Then silence. During ten minutes of keen watchfulness there is no reappearance, and the dugout drifts cautiously down-stream. Two miles lower down, a sandy bank breaks for twenty yards the dreary reed beds which border the stream, and here the canoe halts.

Three hours later, a pink inflated mass comes drifting down, with four grotesquely short legs pointing skyward. A riem is fastened to one of them, and the carcass towed in and made fast to a sapling. Then word is sent to the kraals, and by midday fifty natives have arrived—with six bullocks to haul the carcass out of the river—but it is almost sunset before the black outer skin is removed, the inner side scraped clean of fat, and the hide cut into strips and hung up to dry.

By the following afternoon eighty to a hundred pounds of fat have been rendered down, and the hunter reaches his home camp as darkness falls, with hide and fat worth perhaps ten pounds, as the result of his successful hunt. A fortnight later—on the second occasion referred to—he loses all that and more.

He is returning from an unsuccessful night's hunt on some feeding-grounds down-river. It is almost eleven in the morning, and the sun is nearing its winter zenith. As the dugout rounds a bend where a clump of trees twenty yards behind the reeds denotes

solid ground, there is a rushing sound through the reeds ahead as though a "dust-devil" had whirled to life. The three natives jam the stern of the canoe into the reeds, just as three black masses strike the water in quick succession.

A moment later, while the Greek stands with rifle ready, an elephantine head—with small angry eyes and twitching ears—breaks water ten yards away in mid-stream. It is almost abreast of the boat, and is followed by another and smaller head six feet behind it.

Swiftly the sights lower to the level of the eyes, but even as his finger tightens on the trigger, the canoe rises in the air, and hunter and bullet strike the water almost together. The bow native falls with him into the water, while the two in the stern spring like monkeys into the reeds, and claw, splash and scramble their way ashore toward the trees.

A cow hippo has made her way beneath the canoe, and with legs inert and pendent, has risen under it with the force of a high explosive. The white man strikes out powerfully for the reeds into which the natives have jumped, holding instinctively his beloved rifle high in the air with one hand, although it has already been six feet under water! The enraged cow has bitten a huge section out of the hardwood canoe, and is now joyfully reducing this to matchwood.

Lacking the white man's presence of mind, the

native strikes out for the opposite bank, just as the two big hippo—which had disappeared as the interrupted shot rang out—reappear to watch the cow's activities. The native rises but a few feet from the muzzle of the nearest: there is a quick surge forward; a cavernous mouth opens wide, and great tusks gleam; a swift snap, a crushing of bone, a wild yell, and with both legs crushed to pulp, the native disappears. How the mutilated body is disposed of the crocodiles know; but these—lacking tongues—are silent.

Meanwhile, the white man has struggled through the reeds, and now lies exhausted on the sandy islet with his two natives. Recent fumets, and great depressions in the sand, show where the three hippo have enjoyed a sun-bath, while small tracks denote the presence of a calf. Though the youngster has remained invisible, the cow's attack is explained!

As breath and strength return, my friend ruefully surveys his position. After thirty hours' absence from camp, he finds himself marooned on a small islet in the swamps, minus camp bed, blankets, cooking utensils, tent and some twenty rounds of ammunition; to say nothing of the loss of a boat, and an obligation to pay to the relatives of the deceased native, two heifers as compensation. In all, a loss of some twenty pounds!

Yet he reflects that things might have been worse. He might have been the object of the cow's attack,

instead of the boat. He might have been marooned on the opposite side of the river, where only swamp exists for miles, and no natives may be found. On the side he has reached, there is a village five miles away, where fire and food may be had. That five miles is a swamp knee- to chin-deep in water, and intersected by two lagoons beloved of the crocodiles! Yet "he must needs go that the devil drives!"

After an hour's rest, the three enter the water, the white man leading, and the natives beating the surrounding reeds and the surface of the swamp with branches of bush, to scare away the "crocs." Twice, sullen "plops" in the line of advance proved the utility of this measure, and after four hours of strenuous amphibious travel, the kraal is reached.

After drying his clothes and drinking a calabash of milk, the hunter starts on his seven-mile walk home, arriving there weary and depressed, long after the stars are out. He seeks his bed for the first time in thirty-six hours, having on this occasion lost "leg" and "rubber" in the game by which he lives.

I could understand his bitterness as he complained to me later: "Of what use to drive me from the Zambesi to protect the hippo, while all the natives have guns and can shoot as they like? I worked hard to prepare my hide and fat for market. The natives are too lazy and let it lie around the kraals until it rots. The hippo I killed were useful to me and the buyer.

Those the native kills are useless to any one! Now I must take such risks just to live!"

I myself was once involved in an even worse tragedy, costing two native lives and an expensive rifle. This also happened on the Quando, but some distance higher up, and in another district. Coming from a forest belt one morning, after an unsuccessful hunt, I emerged on the banks of a backwater just as a cow hippo broke water and saluted the morning with her sighing snort. Hastening to the bank, I took cover in the reeds, and when she rose again tried a careful shot.

She sank like a stone, and moreover, I heard a faint "clap" as the bullet struck. I made no doubt therefore that she was dead, and—with my native—made tracks for the nearest village to get assistance. With a prospect of meat in sight, this was soon forthcoming, and we left with four boats and three paddlers in each, to enter the lagoon from the river. We had expected to find the carcass floating, as it was some three hours after the shot that we returned. But there was no sign of any hippo when we arrived; so we cautiously proceeded along the edge of the reeds looking for a suitable landing-place where we could await the body, for the native was as confident as I that the cow was dead.

My boat was leading the procession, and we had gone some distance into the lagoon when there came

a yell from behind, and glancing round, I saw the boat immediately behind me heave into the air, and the three black figures catapult from it. I had barely time to note that one fell right beside the head of an extremely angry-looking hippo when my own troubles started.

My boat suddenly rose into the air at the bows, canted sidewise and shot me into the water with my rifle in hand. Coming to the surface, I struck out with one hand for the reeds, which my bow native had already gained, when glancing over my shoulder at a sudden yell from behind, I saw the rear one of my two other natives seized in the closing jaws of another enraged hippo!

I promptly dropped my rifle and covered the last few yards at a racing stroke, reaching the reeds an instant before the second native followed me. The others had forced the canoes into the reeds and were now all ashore gesticulating excitedly, and bewailing the disaster to their comrades.

An investigation showed that one native in the boat behind me had been bitten through the middle and had disappeared, as had one of those in my boat. Both boats had sunk, and were unlikely to be recovered; while there were now three heads visible in the lagoon at intervals, all very much alive!

I could only assume that my bullet had ricocheted from the head of the cow, merely stunning her tem-

porarily, and that she was one of a small school which probably included calves. Our advent had provided them with opportunity for a revenge they had taken full advantage of.

Compensation for the boats and the natives cost me six heifers, and in addition I had lost a rifle worth forty pounds. Fortunately, I had had no other equipment with me. There remained two facts on which I could congratulate myself however. One was that in this "no man's" country I could assess the damages myself, instead of leaving it to an official—who would probably have formed a higher estimate—and the second, that I had not risen to the surface in closer proximity to those evil-looking tusks!



CHAPTER III

RHINOCEROS REMINISCENCES

A RHINOCEROS is really a big pig. Few hunters can fail to be impressed with the large-scale porcine attributes he exhibits both mentally and physically. In head and eyes, legs and body, gluttonous feeding habits, and flesh production; in capacity for slumber, unreasoning gusts of sudden fury, and astonishing celerity of movement, he has much in common with the often somnolent and sometimes ferocious boar, of the forest and the farmyard.

Like elephant and giraffe, he is a "hush, hush" animal in British Africa. Stout gentlemen in far-away mansions have conceived the idea that when in divers ways they acquired slices of the great continent, they acquired also the right to say on what terms these might be hunted.

Other men, lean of body and keen of eye, whose dwelling is the roofless one of the African bush, think otherwise. They believe the right to hunt these devolves on some at birth, and on the majority, not at all. They say the privileged are known by a readi-

ness to stake life on a game of chance, capacity for strenuous toil, and ability to endure hunger, thirst and sickness for long periods.

I am one of the latter belief. Wherefore, in describing my adventures with these, my recollection of the districts where they occurred is lamentably vague. It is quite possible, for instance, that I may remember an adventure which occurred in Northern Rhodesia, as happening in the Katanga or Angola! But as my recollection is quite reliable in other respects, I trust the reader will waive the point.

A rhino requires little provocation to become rampageous. He is usually in a condition of truculent passion, when observed by humans in his natural habitat. The man-scent is anathema to him, and whereas other animals express their dislike of it in flight, the rhino's furious resentment is expressed in an instant offensive. He alone attacks man without warning or provocation—always excepting man-eating lions, and "rogue" elephants—and it is the unexpectedness of his attack which so often renders it deadly.

Yet if the man be cool-nerved, alert and active, it is generally easy to avoid these attacks and launch a counter-offensive. For the rhino's charge is directed by blind unreasoning fury, rather than intelligence; a mad and murderous desire to remove the source of the hated taint. If the source removes *itself*, with

speed and discretion, the big stupid pig often stands nonplussed—a picture of comical puzzlement—until a bullet solves the enigma of its disappearance for him!

Keen scent he has, some speed, and great strength, but little of the intelligence and determination of either the elephant or buffalo. In East Africa, in the Tsavo district of the Nyika Plateau, is a dense thorn-bush country such as the tough-skinned rhino loves, and on several occasions rhino attacked moving patrols of troops in that district. As a rule, the men are not allowed to fire, and simply scattered. Once up-wind of the patrol, the stupid beast would stand and sniff the air for the taint, and not finding it, would snort his disgust and blunder on. On at least one occasion, however, he paid the penalty, and his head was brought into camp.

All that is necessary in face of a rhino charge, is to spring well clear of his path and race down-wind in the direction he comes from, provided he is alone, of course. For his eyesight is poor, and once out of scent range one may observe him at leisure. Only the cow with a calf in the vicinity is really vindictive, and in following such a beast the greatest care should be exercised to locate her before approaching. Since the habitat of the breed is the dense thorn-bush referred to, this is not so easy as it sounds!

While hunting with a friend in the Katanga some years ago, we had an experience with rhino which is

probably unique, and goes to show that the evil-tempered beasts as often go on the "rampage" against their own kind, as against man; at all events where a mate is concerned. It seems to show, too, that feminine preference for the strong male transcends marital affection even in these huge pachyderms.

We were hunting for a living, and my friend had told the natives that he would pay handsomely for a young rhino calf, as he had received offers of two hundred fifty pounds for a specimen, from one of the zoos.

Two native elephant hunters, armed with muzzle loaders, came one morning upon a clearing in the bush which showed the fresh spoor of a calf. With the reward in mind, they investigated and soon found the baby rhino hidden under some brushwood in a shallow pit dug by the mother. Before they could remove the tiny creature, a squealing grunt of rage, and the crash of a heavy body, warned them that time was precious!

They started to move—so hurriedly that one forgot his gun! Perhaps this increased his speed. At all events, he outstripped his comrade, and hearing the pursuit diverge in his rear, he glanced round in time to see his companion leap upward and grasp the limb of a tree, seconds before the enraged cow passed beneath it. To do this he had also dropped his gun, and the more fortunate native—knowing that the cow

would not leave her calf—stayed to watch what would happen.

Her first care was to reduce the gun to match-wood; then she rooted the ground viciously with her horn, pausing to utter vengeful squeals of rage and eye the trembling native in the tree. But she kept a wary eye on the calf, and it became apparent that she would remain too close to allow the escape of the anxious prisoner. Seeing this, he yelled to his comrade to "run and fetch the white men, as, if they heard there was a calf, they would come quickly and kill the mother!" This seemed sound reasoning, and the unarmed native set off.

But our camp was ten miles away, and as it was already about nine in the morning when the boy started, it was mid-afternoon before we arrived on the scene. We were very anxious to secure the calf, and expecting to find only the cow on sentry duty, we anticipated no difficulty in settling accounts with her. Nevertheless, we were careful—under the guidance of the native—to approach up-wind, and this precaution enabled us to witness a curious scene.

On our near approach we had been surprised to hear what sounded like squealing grunts of rage from *several* animals; the thud of blows, clashing of horns, and the trampling of heavy feet; mingling with occasional sounds as of falling bodies. Parting the bushes cautiously, we saw two huge bulls engaged in

mortal combat close to the tree where the native still clung, and it was evident from his bleeding condition, sobbing breaths and frequent falls, that one of the combatants was almost done.

The cow divided her attention between nuzzling the calf—now emerged from his concealment—and charging viciously at the already beaten beast. Before we had watched many minutes, a combined charge of the cow and his opponent placed this animal hors de combat for the last time. Twice he essayed unsuccessfully to rise, and each time the cow horned him viciously; then she turned and nosed the victor delicately in shameless congratulation!

Just here we took a hand. The victorious bull fell at the first shot, and two others in quick succession sent the cow to join him in the shades reserved for rhino. The defeated beast was already dying, and a merciful bullet started him, too, on the road his conqueror and his faithless spouse had taken. For on being released the native related the following episode.

After his friend had left to call us, the cow had divided her attention between him and the calf, but it appeared to him that “she was looking for something,” as she uttered repeated “calls” and stood as if listening. At last—about noon—one of the calls was answered, and soon afterward the bull which we had seen defeated, appeared.

He was then bleeding, and slightly lame, and

seemed to have been fighting; but his spouse—instead of offering sympathy—ran at him viciously and attempted to horn him. These attacks he either dodged or met with his sound shoulder, but according to the native witness he made no attempt at retaliation. After expressing displeasure in this manner two or three times, the cow trotted off, and the bull had lain down close to the tree groaning occasionally as though in pain. But when the native attempted a surreptitious descent of the tree, he had quickly come to his feet, and had proved as vigilant a sentry as the cow he had relieved.

Some little time before we arrived, the cow had suddenly reappeared, accompanied by a bull which also bore marks of recent conflict. No time had been wasted in preliminaries, but with squeals of rage, the two bulls had at once joined issue. The cow had at first stood by her calf and watched the conflict, but as the bull which had first arrived fell more repeatedly before his adversary's onslaught, she had lent her aid to the victor in the manner we had witnessed.

Examining the trail by which the bulls had come, we found this led to a pan about five miles away, and out of curiosity as to the meaning of the singular scene we had witnessed, we followed it. From blood spoor en route, and a trampled battle-ground at the water's edge, my friend was able out of his hunting experience to reconstruct the probable sequence of events, and the natives endorsed his opinion.



HIPPOS ON A SANDBANK

The calf was only a few days old, and the bull had gone first to water, being bound—in accordance with rhino custom—while the calf is too young to travel to return and relieve the cow on guard. But at the pan he had met a solitary bull, and the cow taint he carried had led to challenge from the stranger and intermittent battle through the night hours. He feared to return until his rival departed, lest he lead him to the cow and provoke battle to the death: but when his adversary had at last temporarily retreated, he had returned—sorely wounded—by a circuitous route. Prolonged thirst, and the threat to the calf, had not improved the cow's temper, and she had expressed disapproval in the manner described by the native.

When she at last reached the pan she had found the second bull there: perhaps seeking a resumption of the conflict, or driven by thirst occasioned by his wounds. Whichever it may have been, he had at once followed the cow, and with the mating urge strong upon him, and greater recuperative powers than his older adversary, had finally achieved a victory to which the cow had contributed!

The young rhino died of stomach trouble—as so many of them do—but we accounted ourselves fortunate in having witnessed a battle between the lords of the lonely places, and in being vouchsafed an insight into animal psychology seldom given to man.

On another occasion a friend and myself were conducting a young fellow recently out from Eng-

land, and as he was particularly keen on rhino, we went into Portuguese territory, where in a certain district we knew of they were very plentiful. On the day of the hunt I went down with a dose of fever and stayed at the camp. What happened, came to me that evening from the lips of my friend.

The youngster was a fair shot, but inclined to be very cocksure, and to resent advice. In the veld it is dangerous to refuse to learn, and he found it so on this occasion. They had found the spoor of a large bull shortly after dawn, and followed it up. Only one native accompanied them, but about twenty others followed behind, to be handy if and when required.

By the time the sun was an hour old, they were already seven miles from camp, and for about half that distance had followed the spoor steadily. Then they came to an open glade, and ahead of them saw a patch of dense thorn-bush. Considering it possible that there might be a cow and calf with the bull, this looked to my friend like a probable cover. So he stopped his client and whispered: "In all probability we shall find our friend in there. If it is necessary to crawl, let me go first, and follow without noise!" Then, as he noted a rebellious shadow on the boy's face he added: "Don't worry! I'll give you the shot at the right time. Rhino do unexpected things at times, and I want to weigh up the probabilities before you come into action!"

As they reached the thorn-bush they were compelled to assume a crouching posture, to avoid the interlacing branches, which had swung across the rhino path since his passage. My friend went softly forward followed by his client and the native, and after about a hundred yards emerged into a sort of natural clearing in the bush, filled with stunted bushes and a few saplings.

The spoor went straight on across the clearing, to a similar patch of bush on the opposite side, and the youngster stepped eagerly ahead of his guide to follow it up. There was no time to give chapter and text—to warn him that the animals might be ambushed near—so my friend caught his arm and said: “Wait! He may be watching from cover and get our wind. We must be prepared for a charge.”

“Oh, hell!” the youth answered impatiently. “I am not nervous, man! I have my rifle! I want to see if he has gone on. He may be running away and increasing his lead!”

Seeing that he was determined to buy his experience, my friend wasted no further argument, but brought his rifle to the ready and watched keenly for any sign of life, especially on the left-hand side of the clearing, which was down-wind. He had not long to wait. The young fellow had barely covered half the distance to the opposite side—about fifty yards—when there came a vicious snort, and a mighty crash

of bushes on his left, and a black mass, with lowered head carrying two evil-looking horns, hurled itself toward him at racing speed.

The startled youth whirled in his tracks, and jerked his express to his shoulder, firing hurriedly. The spurt of dust to the right of the charging bull showed the futility of the shot, and on the echo of the report came the crack of my friend's Mauser. The bullet went straight to the heart, and the great beast swerved slightly as he plunged onward, but his massive shoulder caught the young man full in the chest, sending his rifle into the air and his body crashing earthward several yards away.

There he lay inert, but for the moment there was no time to go to his assistance. A second rhino had followed ten yards behind the first, and now came to a slithering halt beside her fallen mate, where he had somersaulted to earth twenty yards from where the bullet struck him. My friend had expected this, and his sights had covered her shoulder as she crossed the clearing. As soon as she halted, his rifle spoke again, and she fell in a heap beside her mate. A few convulsive efforts to rise, a falling back sidewise, and a stiffening shudder of the short thick legs, told that she would rise no more.

Then my friend hastened to his fallen client, to find him slowly regaining the breath which the tremendous impact had knocked from his body. Ex-

amination revealed a badly bruised shoulder, and a broken rib; for he had unfortunately struck a fallen log as he fell. Like most men in the veld, my friend had some rough surgical knowledge, and we always included a medicine chest in the outfit carried by the reserve boys. This was now sent for, and while they waited, they exchanged impressions of the furious three minutes just past. According to my friend's account the conversation went something like this:

"I say, old chap," commenced the youth, "it strikes me I have to thank you for my life. And apologize to you for neglecting your advice."

Shrugging his shoulders, my friend replied: "You don't have to thank me. I'm here to see that you don't get into trouble or buy your experience too dearly. As for taking advice, your refusal to do so is not unusual. Most 'new chums' have better hearts than heads until they learn to strike a balance! I'm only sorry that you are likely to pay for this lesson with the loss of a month's hunting!"

"So it appears! Still, it might have been worse, and would have been but for your shot! How do you account for the rhino coming from the left? The spoor went straight on!"

"There is nothing unusual in that. A wounded buffalo is not the only animal which deals in ambuscades. A rhino charges on scent, often when the person he charges is not hunting, and is unaware of his

presence. Very often, especially if a cow or calf is in the neighborhood, the rhino turns back parallel to his trail and seeks a resting-place for the day to leeward of it.

"I expected that to-day. The ground here showed that this place is much used by more than one animal, and from the quantity of fumets I should say it is the anteroom to a favorite bedchamber! I warned you as a result of those observations. There was no time to detail them. These animals were resting, and as you moved you gave them your wind. Probably we shall find there is a calf near by."

And so it proved. Search revealed a small rhino lying concealed as usual in a shallow pit covered with brushwood, with only his small nose showing. In two days he was quite companionable, but alas, he was only three days old when found, and cow's milk was a hundred and twenty miles away, at our own home camp. Maizena gruel made with condensed milk soon upset his tender stomach, and five days later, he followed his mother. As we viewed the corpse my friend muttered gloomily: "Two hundred quid gone west!" And I knew he was thinking of the little creature's value to far-away zoos.

It may be noted here that even cow's milk is often inadequate for very young animals. The capturing of specimens is an easy matter compared with keeping them alive afterward. They must of necessity be

very young; for within a week or two they become strong enough to put up resistance, and then often suffer injury in capture.

I have since found that what the Dutch call "*meelbal*" mixed with cow's milk, gives the best results. The former is just flour baked dry and hard, and a little of this is scraped into cow's milk diluted with water. The difficulty in many hunting districts is to keep the cows handy, both on account of tsetse fly and carnivora. One has, of course, no time to build suitable strong kraals under such conditions.

A very comical adventure with rhino—which might nevertheless have proved tragic—occurred when I was returning from an arduous thousand-mile trip through the Katanga, some years ago. I was passing through a belt of thorn country where spoor and fumets showed that the rhino had not overlooked its claims to their consideration, and had with me about twenty carriers. Marching at the head of the line, I had just reflected that a sudden charge from the bush would considerably disorganize my rear-guard, when the half-expected happened.

We were crossing a fairly open space when a chorus of yells caused me to turn my head in time to see every carrier drop his load and race for the trees, into which most of them climbed like monkeys. Behind them plunged a big black rhino, which had charged out of the bush on the right of the path.

Right in his path lay my black steel trunk, which a native had dropped, and lowering his head, the bull drove his front horn clean through the bottom—which faced him—so that the box became firmly wedged on his nose. Whether he imagined this an added weapon or not, I can not say, but he promptly charged at the last native to leave the ground, who was only just beginning to climb into his tree. The rhino's charge moved him to surprising activity, and he was well out of range of the horn before the bull arrived.

Then the stupid beast endeavored for a moment to rid himself of the incubus by dashing it on the ground, and against the tree, but this seemed only to wedge it more firmly. He looked so comical that I could have laughed had not thoughts of my clothes and papers induced gravity! So I raised my rifle and was just about to fire, when the bull suddenly headed for the path by which we had come.

There was a crash, as my rearguard—who had just arrived on the scene—dropped his load and raced for a handy tree. As he sprang upward and seized a limb, my black box—impelled by the rhino—took him squarely in the buttocks, and lifted him several feet into the air. He improved the occasion by seizing another branch and pulling himself up into safety, howling with pain and terror. His unsympathetic comrades, safe on their perches, chaffed him unmercifully about his inability to climb without help, while

the bull stood squealing with rage and trying to rid himself of the box!

I promptly put paid to his account, with a solid .400 behind the shoulder. My box was worthless afterward, and the contents had not been improved by his attentions. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the last native would have been impaled but for the box, which acted like the button on a foil! I remember how I sighed for a camera on that occasion. A picture of that big stupid pig, endeavoring to rid himself of the box he had charged so eagerly, would probably have been worth more than the entire contents!

CHAPTER IV

BATTLES WITH BUFFALO

WHEREVER a few big-game hunters foregather to exchange reminiscences, the argument as to whether the lion, elephant, buffalo, or rhino, is most dangerous, is sure to arise sooner or later. The controversy has continued since these animals were known to either natives or Europeans. It will probably continue while any remain to be hunted!

Each bases his opinion on his own experiences, and each can support his argument with chapter and text. Personally, however, I would yield the buffalo the palm by day and the lion by night. I have been in graver danger from elephants than from buffalo, but for sheer fighting courage, and implacable determination to kill, the wounded buffalo stands alone. I except man-eating lions and rogue elephants, of course, although I credit the buffalo with a terrible vindictiveness which even those degenerates can scarcely equal. The following instances will evidence his courage, cunning and determination.

Some years ago, two young men went hunting in

Northern Rhodesia, about a hundred miles north of Broken Hill. One morning they came upon a herd of buffalo in a long vlei about half a mile wide, and when they first saw them, the animals were grazing about three hundred yards away in the open. One man had a .350 magnum, and the other a .318 express rifle. The one with the larger bore selected a fine bull, and his companion a large cow a little farther away. By preconcerted arrangement, both fired together.

At the report of the rifles the herd stampeded for the bush on the opposite side of the vlei, but before they had gone fifty yards the bull fell in a heap and remained motionless. Meanwhile, the cow could be seen limping along in the rear of the herd with a broken shoulder. Eager to catch them up and get a second shot, the young fellows ran out on the vlei, forgetting to reload their rifles before doing so.

Intending to have a look at the dead bull as they passed, they headed in his direction, but their eyes were chiefly engaged in watching the herd, which had halted under the opposite trees. They were only a few yards from the supposed dead animal when one of them glanced toward it, and immediately shouted to his comrade: "Look out, Tom! He's getting up!"

Sure enough, the bull was just rising to his knees, and remembering their omission to reload, the pair bolted! The bull at once pursued the nearest, and

was already close behind him when his friend tripped and fell over one of the tufts of burned reeds which dotted the vlei everywhere.

Like a flash the buffalo left the man he was following and charged on the fallen one, catching him with the "bosses" of his horns as he rose, and hurling him several yards away. Then he went down on his knees beside the injured man, and twisting his great head sidewise, tried to get the point of his horn into the man's stomach! He only succeeded in getting it under the waistband of his trousers, and in ripping the trousers and shirt clean off his body! His chum hastily jammed another cartridge into the breech, and running close up, put another bullet through the bull's heart, which finished him.

Then they sent for the writer and a friend, and on examination we found several ribs broken in the injured man, his nose damaged, and his body a mass of bruises and contusions. He was sent by train to Broken Hill hospital, where he remained six weeks. Had he been hunting alone, it would have been his first and last buffalo hunt!

This misadventure was due to inexperience. The old hand knows that "a buffalo is never dead until its throat is cut," but the novice is deceived by appearances. The points to note are the appalling vindictiveness and devilish cunning the animal displayed. He was shot through the lungs, but could easily have

risen and followed the herd had he wished to do so. What other animal would lie and slum death until the hunters reached him, solely in a spirit of revenge?

Here is another instance. I was hunting on the Kafue headwaters with a young fellow new to the country, and having a touch of fever one afternoon I stayed in camp, while my companion went out with one native and his bull-terrier dog, to look for meat. Soon after dark, when I was getting anxious, the boy came into camp and reported that the white man was "treed" by a wounded buffalo, and "could not get down"! As the place he described was eight miles away—in thick bush—I could do nothing until morning; but at daybreak I set off, with half a dozen natives.

When I arrived on the scene the young man was still perched in a small tree about twelve feet above the ground, having fastened himself there with his belt. A few yards from the tree, a buffalo bull lay dead and stiff, and twenty paces from his body lay the torn and mangled corpse of the dog. Under the tree was the young chap's rifle, trampled into the ground, with a broken stock! What he told me was this.

He had wounded the buffalo the preceding afternoon about four o'clock, on the flats by the river, and had then followed him into the bush for about three miles. Being a novice, the fact that the bull had left

the herd and was traveling alone, conveyed no warning to him. He had kept on the blood spoor, with the native following and leading the dog. Under such conditions the dog would have been more useful in advance as a scout, but he had been afraid of losing a second shot through the dog stampeding the animal.

When he arrived opposite the tree in which I found him, he was startled by a crash and snort on his left, and looked round to discover the buffalo about thirty yards away, and in full charge. He had doubled on his tracks as usual, and lain in wait for the hunter in a clump of thick bush. The young fellow had been too "rattled" to shoot, and had raced for the tree, dropping his rifle to facilitate climbing. Even then he would have been too slow, had not the native released the dog, which dashed forward and held up the bull's charge for a moment, before he paid the penalty with his life.

Then the buffalo dashed at the tree, and the condition of the bark showed his earnest efforts to knock it down or dislodge the man who clung to it. He had not succeeded, but admitting defeat at last, had kept guard for an hour or two, and then apparently collapsed. The prisoner had thought him dead, but watching carefully, had seen the small eyes glowing redly in the starlight, and had decided to remain where he was until daylight. When dawn broke, he was still distrustful of the appearance of death—

though this time it was genuine enough—and knowing the boy had gone to call me, he had awaited my arrival on his uncomfortable perch!

That wounded buffalo wanted water badly, and knew where to obtain it, but he wanted revenge on the hunter still more, and died in the endeavor to satisfy his hate! It is that deadly singleness of purpose which makes the buffalo so greatly to be feared.

The very first one I shot gave me all the proofs I needed of that implacable spirit and indomitable courage, though I was not hunting, and in fact shot him by accident! I shot him in the dark, in mistake for a lion!

I was traveling with two ox-wagons and driving the rear one myself, when the front wagon stopped. I imagined a strop had got loose or a "trence" broken, and waited for it to move; but as nothing happened, and an unusual silence continued, I walked ahead to investigate. I found the native driver and leader crouched in the road in front of the twenty-ox span, staring intently at the bush. As I came up, the driver whispered: "Lions, master!"

I immediately ran back to my wagon for my rifle, and on returning, crouched in the roadway with the natives. Against the starlit background I could make out three forms moving slowly, parallel with the road, and as one was heading for a large ant-heap I aimed at the forward side of this, ready to shoot

when his bulk emerged from behind it, for I could not see my rifle sights in the starlight. As the forequarters loomed black on the forward side I fired.

There was a crash of hoofs, a snort, and three forms raced madly away. As the ground echoed the pounding hoofs, the driver said: "*Ikona n'gonyama! Inyati!*" (It is not lions! It is buffalo!) And buffalo it was!

As this dawned on me, the animal I had hit wheeled in his tracks and came back toward the road, crossing it some fifty yards ahead of the front wagon. Then he raced down through the bush toward the wagons, and came to a halt—coughing and gasping—abreast of the rear vehicle.

I knew by his leaving the others, and by the sound of his gasps, that he was badly wounded, so I promptly climbed on the wagon and called to the front driver to move on. It seemed wisdom to leave investigation until the morning! But as Sam called to his cattle there was a grunt and a thud of hoofs, and a red-eyed fury, weighing some fourteen hundred pounds, came full-tilt at the wagon.

He struck the buckbeam with such force that he raised the body of the wagon—weighing perhaps twelve hundred pounds—several inches off the carriage, and would have sent me overboard had I not taken a handhold! Then he raised himself on his hind legs and placed his forefeet on the rail, while blood

and foam flew from his nostrils with each stertorous breath. But I was ready, and placing my .405 Winchester against his head, I sent a bullet through his brain which dropped him in a heap in the road.

Next morning I found the force of his impact had slightly cracked the three-inch buckbeam of hard Cape stinkwood! I felt satisfied then that that charge would have done me "grievous bodily harm" had I received it! The first shot had gone clean through the lungs, and finding himself mortally wounded he had preferred revenge to escape. The wagon must have been a surprise to him, but its size had not deterred him, and he had certainly made a good attempt to "get" me, under difficult circumstances. I assumed that the driver's voice calling to his oxen led the bull to think we had approached his ambush in pursuit, hence inducing the charge.

The first time I really hunted buffalo in daylight, I was fortunately accompanied by a man of some experience. It is possibly due to that fact that I am alive to-day to write of the occurrence. In late afternoon we came across a herd of buffalo loitering in a small glade in the forest on their way to water. The herd was about fifty strong, and accompanied by several large bulls. Selecting two of the largest of these, we fired almost together, and both animals dropped. The herd dashed away, and we walked forward to examine our "bag."

Suddenly the bull I had shot jumped to his feet and headed back into the bush from which they and we had come, entering it about fifty yards away from us. We decided first to examine and give instructions for skinning the one lying in the open, and then to follow up the wounded one. But we had barely walked ten yards into the open when the apparently dead animal jumped up and charged us determinedly!

He had lain about forty yards from us, and as he decreased the distance to twenty paces my friend said: "Now!" and we both fired together. The bull pitched forward on his head, but he was up again almost instantly, and coming for us fast as a broken shoulder would allow him to move. Again we fired together, and both bullets entered the brain, bringing him down with a crash only about ten paces from our feet!

We found the first shot had cut through liver and stomach and smashed two ribs in its exit. Of the two we fired as he charged, one had perforated the lung and the other had driven clean through the shoulder from the front, breaking it, so that he had continued his charge virtually on three legs! Looking at the now quiet bulk, my friend said: "I raise my hat to a brave beast! It takes more than a wound or two to beat pluck like that. We can thank our stars he didn't reach us alive!" A dictum in which I fully concurred!

Proceeding after the wounded animal, my friend arranged that I should follow the actual blood spoor, and act as a sort of "center guide"; while a native took a parallel course through the bush about ten yards to my right, and he himself traveled on a similar line the same distance to my left. He hoped by this precaution to take the bull in flank as he lay in ambush, or at least to locate him before he had time to charge.

We had gone perhaps two miles in this formation when the native on my right yelled: "Look out, master! He's coming!"

Out of the tail of my eye I saw his black figure race rearward, and at the same instant a shaggy presentment of fury hurtled through the bush toward me from a clump of evergreen trees twenty yards to the right of the path. My friend yelled: "Run to your left and leave him to me! I have him covered!"

The advice seemed good to me, and as I started to act on it I heard his rifle speak. Running for all I was worth across my friend's line of march, and stimulated to greater exertion by pounding hoofs and sobbing grunts behind me, I heard his rifle crack again. There was a stumble and a deep gurgling breath behind me, but still the hoof beats followed, albeit more slowly and uncertainly.

Passing under the limb of a tree about eight feet from the ground, I discarded my rifle and sprang

upward, seized it and drew myself up, just as a black form rushed staggeringly beneath me to pitch headlong a few yards beyond. Another shot made his death certain, but I am assured that at the distance from which he broke cover I could never have stopped him by shooting, in time to prevent him doing me mortal injury. Neither could I have distanced him by running, but for the effects of my friend's two shots as I ran! As it was, it was a very near thing. I am not at all keen, since then, on following wounded buffalo into long grass or timber, unless I have dogs or plenty of natives to give warning or distract his attention.

Once during my early days in the police, I came across a herd of buffalo one morning accidentally, and decided to try a shot. I knew nothing about the animals then, and without doubt my horse saved me. He chanced to be one we often used for shooting antelope, and was steady and kind to handle.

Following a native footpath I emerged from the bush on to the edge of a large vlei soon after sunrise, and saw a herd of from sixty to eighty buffalo dotted about the vlei grazing, with several big bulls grazing on the outside, and at some distance from the rest.

The nearest—and one of the biggest—was about two hundred yards from me, so dismounting, I knelt down, aimed carefully behind the shoulder and fired. He fell to the shot and I walked out on the vlei

toward him, but I had gone only a few yards when he jumped to his feet, and with head down charged toward me. I was hesitating whether to mount or to fire again, when he suddenly pitched forward on his head and lay with legs outstretched, and to all appearances dead.

I had imagined that death had overtaken him midway in his charge, and so walked toward him again. I had arrived within ten or twelve paces when I saw his little eyes blinking rapidly and glaring at me with the fire of a deadly hate in them. At the same moment he started to scramble up, while with one leap I reached the saddle.

My horse launched into his stride at once, but glancing over my shoulder, I saw that great head not five paces behind his tail, with wicked eyes seeming to glint like live coals. I "sat down" to it and rode for all I was worth! After covering about a furlong I looked back to see my enemy again stretched on his side and apparently dead. The herd, of course, had long since vanished, for the buffalo does not trouble to avenge his comrades. Each vendetta is a purely personal affair! And without doubt, each is fully capable of avenging *himself*!

So I circled back, and dismounting at a hundred yards, I sent in another bullet behind the shoulder. Immediately the gallant animal struggled desperately to rise, and indeed got to his knees, only to fall over

sidewise. Then he gave a few spasmodic kicks and lay still. But to make sure this time, I put another bullet through the skull to the brain at twenty paces, before approaching closer.

My first bullet had perforated both lungs, and he must have died very soon from that alone, for the soft-nosed bullet had torn the lungs considerably. But in spite of pain and the hemorrhage movement must have caused him, he had twice essayed to charge, and even to pursue the horse, while his cunning simulation of death would undoubtedly have misled me fatally, save for my horse's assistance. A horse is probably the most useful auxiliary the buffalo hunter can have!

This was evidenced again some time later. A man capturing game for a South African zoo, in Southern Rhodesia, described in the local paper a buffalo hunt on the Kafue which formed his first experience of the breed. Like myself in the incident just recorded, he had shot a bull, and judged from its inertia and the way it fell, that it was dead. So he walked up to it, leading his horse. When a few yards distant, the bull jumped up and charged. The hunter mounted hastily and launched into a gallop only just in time to escape. Had he been on foot, there would have been another tragedy to record.

I have seen many sales of kit in Livingstone, due to the death of the owners while hunting buffalo.



RIVAL BUFFALOES

Most of the victims were new chums, and usually it was the habit of shamming death, or of doubling on his trail, which had misled them. The buffalo is the one animal in the veld which can not be stopped, except by death, when he charges. Both lion and elephant may be turned, but only his own death or that of the hunter will end the buffalo's charge.

In conclusion it may be said that buffalo are still very plentiful in certain districts, although the rinderpest in 1896 killed them off almost to the same extent as domestic cattle. Even to-day their herd strength is nothing like so great as formerly. Since they favor tsetse fly country, and tend to assist the breeding of these, the fact is not altogether to be lamented!

PART THREE

SILENT LIFE OF SILENT SPACES

CHAPTER I

TALES AND TRAITS OF ANTELOPES

Eland

THE noble and stately eland may well be described as the king of the antelope species, although he is a monarch to delight the artist and the priest rather than the warrior. In speed he does not excel, and ferocity and pugnacity are not his attributes. He is a beautiful epitome of the milder virtues of clean and blameless living, prudence and wisdom. Nevertheless, in size, strength and majesty of mien, he lacks nothing of kingliness.

Few of his species survive south of the Zambesi to-day, and those few have been protected for more than twenty years past as "royal game." Even north of the Zambesi there are large tracts of country where eland are seldom found, although other antelope are plentiful. On the other hand, there are areas where

herds of several hundred may still be met with, but troops of ten to fifty are more common.

It is said that when the rinderpest swept the country from north to south about thirty years ago, the eland suffered as greatly as the buffalo. Yet rinderpest is a bovine disease, which did not attack the antelope species to the same extent as buffalo and domestic cattle. The former is, of course, purely bovine, and in appearance, at least, the wildebeeste—which did not suffer much numerically—is much more of a bovine type than the eland.

While less common to-day than sable, roan, wildebeeste and many others, the eland is still numerically stronger than the buffalo, and more widely distributed. The writer is of the opinion that the depletion of the once large eland herds and their total disappearance from certain districts, is due rather to native hunting than to rinderpest.

The eland has no great speed, and owing to his great size and weight becomes exhausted sooner than other animals. Even to-day, natives who can run for thirty miles on end, frequently run him down until he drops from exhaustion; and in the days when natives were in constant training for warfare, "marathon runners" were plentiful in every kraal.

No firearms were then in native possession, and this beautiful antelope represented one of the few wild creatures which one or two natives might success-

fully hunt on foot, with the knowledge that when brought to bay he would not attack. Thus it is probable that for generations he was more often pursued than other animals, and this thesis would account not only for the decrease in numbers, but also for his timidity and caution, and highly developed senses of sight and hearing.

Eland are usually found in forests thirty to forty miles wide, containing a large proportion of evergreen shrubs, and bounded on either side by valleys containing permanent water. Doubtless, at one time, tracts of this nature, but only five to fifteen miles in width, formed his habitat. But it is obvious that from these he could be more easily driven into the open, and hunting has probably induced the preference he now exhibits for the larger belts. Since the latter are comparatively rare, and the former plentiful, the choice forced upon him may have led to an erroneous impression of his numbers. That he is seldom found in the smaller belts may be due not so much to diminishing herd strength, as to instinctive realization that these are unsafe.

In the summer, when water is plentiful in the forest, he seldom leaves its shelter, but in the winter he will emerge at sundown, or soon after, into the valleys, and spend the night in grazing, after his thirst is satisfied. But he always returns to the forest before dawn, and will not pause to rest until many

miles away from the valley where he has spent the night.

In districts frequently hunted he will seldom return to the same valley for a week or more, his next drink being taken perhaps forty miles away. He presents this difference from other antelope by reason of the fact that he requires water only once in two or three days, and prefers the young leaves of evergreen shrubs to grass as food. Where found in forest belts of less width, owing to hunting being infrequent, herds may be intercepted as late as ten o'clock in the morning, crossing from one belt to another. But after dawn they seldom or never stop to feed in open country.

It is during winter that the bull attains his best condition, and at this season the hunter will follow a single spoor, since during these months the bulls leave the herds and wander through the forest alone. Only once at this season have I met a full-grown bull in company, and then only with two cows, while on many occasions I have encountered the magnificently obvious herd leaders enjoying their solitary vacation.

The first of these was in 1912, on the Zambesi River in Barotseland, where parklike country extended to the water's edge. Walking alone, a mile ahead of my wagons, soon after daybreak, the sunlight caught and imparted a silky sheen to a patch of gray among the green foliage. The heavy sand had

rendered my approach inaudible, and dropping on my knee I became eagerly alert. Then with slow stately steps, there came into view a magnificent eland bull, evidently retiring belatedly from a drink, to his forest seclusion.

As he stood with head raised, sniffing the morning air suspiciously, I brought my sights to bear behind the mighty shoulder, and—at two hundred yards—fired. A slight startled jump, and at a long steady trot, the bull headed across the road for the thickly bushed hills on my right. I had not heard the bullet “clap,” and thinking I had missed him, I raced diagonally across his line of retreat to intercept him and secure a second shot.

Suddenly his form became visible, just as he halted amid the trees, but as my rifle came to my shoulder he sank quietly to his knees. For a few moments I watched, and as he did not move, I made my way rapidly to the spot. With his legs gathered under him he lay in ordinary bovine sleeping posture, but with his beautiful head stretched out in front of him, and chin resting on the ground. It was evident that he had died without a struggle as his body touched the earth.

He was a splendid specimen of the tufted eland. A great mass of velvety hair covered the forehead and depended from neck and throat, the skin being covered with fine short hair of the slate gray color

which the Dutch term "blue." Fine white lines extended from back to belly, similar to the markings on the koodoo. His appearance was so handsome that I almost regretted my good fortune.

Then and there a suspicion came to me which the years have strengthened, viz., that regulations which restrict shooting to three bulls yearly, and prohibit cows being shot, may not after all fulfil their intention of preserving the species in its maximum beauty and development. Such animals as this must take seven or eight years to reach their grand physical development, and the destruction of one of them prevents transmission of such attributes to numerous progeny in a single season. A cow may impart her characteristics to only a single embryo in a year, and cows are very numerous, while their habit of roaming in herds with young and immature bulls makes it improbable that a cow shot would be the finest in the herd.

But it is always the finest bulls which wander alone in winter, and under the regulations it is these the hunter must seek. Multiply the number of hunters by three, and the total is not merely the yearly decrease in the eland herds due to shooting, but the yearly toll of the *fathers* of the herds, the very finest of the breed! Surely one bull and two cows, instead of three bulls, would militate less against a proper increase. As things are it will not be long before

young and immature bulls sire the yearly increase, and the species deteriorate in beauty and size in consequence!

Examining my prize, I was puzzled to account for the apparent absence of any wound, no blood or bullet hole being visible. When my wagons arrived I obtained assistance to turn the great body over, and then we found a bullet hole in the armpit, which had been hidden by the shoulder. The bullet was a 9.3m m (.366) Mauser. This had penetrated the lower part of the heart and been stopped by the opposite shoulder, the steel-jacketed bullet having "bulged" on impact!

Yet the animal had run fully two hundred yards after receiving his death-wound. From these facts I drew two conclusions. These were that, owing to his great weight and massive bone, he offers too great a resistance for a soft-nosed bullet to penetrate properly, and that for so large an animal he possesses unusual vitality. Most of the large antelope can not compare with the smaller species in this latter respect.

The size of the neck, too, was astonishing. When severed from the head and shoulders it took three natives to lift it, and could not have weighed less than one hundred fifty pounds. Looking at the mass of solid flesh before me, I concluded that a bullet through the neck would not stop an eland bull—although fatal to most species—unless it struck the spinal column,

and that a bullet of great striking energy would be necessary to do this. For in addition to the flesh, the neck was covered by tough skin nearly three-quarters of an inch thick!

A feature of greater utility was the accumulation of fat around the heart. It was July when I shot this animal and when rendered down, the fat weighed forty-two pounds. Being soft and white—like the tail fat of an Africander sheep—it supplied me with a substitute for butter for some months. In addition, the fat of the kidneys and stomach supplied sufficient for cooking purposes, while the brisket was also edged with solid fat an inch deep. No butchery ever turns out meat to equal a salted eland brisket; and in a land where cooking-fat made from cotton-seed oil costs one and sixpence a pound, the value of such a kill may be imagined, especially as butter is unobtainable!

This eland weighed probably twelve hundred pounds when cleaned and dressed, and whenever I have shot a bull of this size in winter, the heart fat has never been less than thirty—and on two occasions over forty-five—pounds' weight. In summer, however, I have shot bulls yielding as little as ten pounds. This great seasonal variation I have found applies to the hippo also.

Although assisted by a dozen natives, the meat had not all been salted down by sunset, and a small

pile lay on the ground to be dealt with next morning, when we settled down to the evening meal. We were half-way through this, about half an hour after dark, when a sudden spitting snarl, and a rush in the direction of the meat, caused oxen, natives and myself, to spring up simultaneously.

Proceeding to investigate, we found that a leopard had crawled cautiously toward the meat, from within twenty yards of it, and had crossed the ashes of an apparently dead fire which we had used during the day. These were red-hot underneath, and must have burned his chest and stomach severely. If he heard the roars of laughter we all gave vent to when we realized what had happened, he must have felt considerable resentment! Anyhow, he did not come back.

Between 1912 and 1914 I shot a number of eland in various parts of the country without coming across any great variations in type, habits or habitat. Most of these cost me many miles of walking, and I realized that on the occasion described I had been singularly fortunate.

Until 1920 I remained unaware that any other type than the blue (tufted) eland existed. Then in the gray dawn of a morning in Nyassaland I emerged from a forest left to see, hulking against the gloom of the opposite trees, an enormous eland whose size indicated the male sex, but whose golden brown coloring more nearly resembled that of the cow.

The animal was walking slowly in the shade of the opposite trees, and under such conditions the blue eland looks nearly black, and not brown. I had only soft-nosed ammunition with me, but at three hundred yards I fired, and distinctly heard the clap of the bullet. The eland gave a convulsive leap and headed into a tall reed bed. In the course of a three-mile chase I put him up three times. On each occasion I put another bullet into him, and the last passed through both lungs and finally brought him down.

He was if anything slightly bigger than the one I have described, but had no tuft on forehead, neck or chin. His skin was a light fawn color, and he was in fact a distinct type, resembling in color the koodoo rather than the blue eland. Hunters have assured me that they have met with this type, but if it exists in Northern Rhodesia at all, it is much less common than the tufted variety.

I have remarked on the shyness of the eland. Invariably, when they have sighted me first, or a hasty shot has missed them, I have been compelled to relinquish the chase or face an all-day pursuit. Should one fall to the first shot, however, the remainder of the troop will check their flight and stay near the fallen one, thus giving an opportunity for slaughter which only the conscience of the hunter will limit. Here is an instance.

I had patiently followed spoor since dawn—being

badly in need of fat—and about eleven o'clock sighted the moving heads of a troop in short bush about four hundred yards ahead. At the distance, and owing to their bodies being concealed, I could not distinguish the bull, although I knew from the spoor that a big fellow was with the troop. As they were already suspicious I could not risk a nearer approach, so selected the head with the biggest horns, and aimed at the foliage which covered the shoulder.

Off went the troop immediately I fired, including the beast aimed at. But when we had covered the intervening distance and reached the short bush, I was surprised to find the troop standing among the trees on the opposite side, about one hundred fifty yards away. With them was the fine bull I imagined I had fired at. I covered the heart promptly, and fired again, and off went the troop as before.

Following up, we had only gone about a hundred yards when we found the animals standing again. This time the cause was obvious. The big bull was stretched on the ground breathing his last, and investigation showed that he had been shot through the heart.

Subsequently we discovered that the first animal—a large cow—had also received a heart shot, and had fallen a hundred paces from where the troop had first halted. At four hundred paces the steel-jacketed bullet had gone clean through the cow; but at one hun-

dred fifty yards only, it had stayed under the skin of the bull after passing through the body, and was almost "concertina-ed" by the force of impact!

It was, of course, the fall of the cow that had brought the troop to a halt, and had I known she was down, I should not have shot the bull. As it was, it was two o'clock the following morning before I landed the meat in camp, and I had been on my feet twenty-one hours with very little food and no water.

It may be mentioned in conclusion that mounted men may easily capture eland alive, and when so caught they are very docile and easily tamed. Efforts have indeed been made to inspan them for draught purposes, but in spite of their size they are unable to pull the load of an ordinary ox-team. When extra effort is required, and the lash applied, they promptly lie down. Perhaps the "spirit of the wild" which dwells in them, whispers that this is the surest way to avoid a servitude it loathes.

Wildebeeste, Hartebeeste and Tsessebe

In bush country, hartebeeste are most frequently met with alone, and have a range unaffected by local and geographical features. Wildebeeste and tsessebe, however, are rarely found in bush country which does not adjoin large open plains, and most frequently in the plains themselves. Many such border the Zambesi River, and on them big herds of wildebeeste

are found on both banks of the river. Curiously enough, tsessebe are seldom found on the east bank, while plentiful on the west, where they are often in company with wildebeeste.

Hartebeeste are common on both sides of the river, and are met with as often in the bush as on the plains. Sometimes they foregather with wildebeeste, but less frequently than tsessebe. If unmolested, the wildebeeste will remain for many days in the open, and seems indifferent to the heat of the sun. But the other classes which fraternize with him usually seek shade during the heat of the day.

In addition to their preference for the same class of feeding-ground, these three species of ruminants have a curious physical peculiarity in common. All have long ugly faces, and flat, nearly closed nostrils, and in the brain cavity of all of them—and at the top of the nasal passages—will be found large fat maggots, about an inch long!

Why the fly which presumably deposits these should select animals with nostrils so formed, while neglecting those with more accessible nasal passages—such as the roan, sable and eland—seems a mystery. Yet the maggots are never found in the latter species. Like the wildebeeste, both hartebeeste and tsessebe have a habit of shaking their heads violently while grazing, and natives say this is due to “the maggots crawling.”

In 1913 I was stalking a herd of tsessebe between the Zambesi and Cuando Rivers, and emerging on a large vlei I sat down to take a careful shot. Suddenly I noticed what appeared to be two buffalo watching me intently from beneath a large tree about two hundred yards away. As I looked, they came toward me at a lumbering gallop for about fifty yards, and then stood shaking their shaggy heads, and pawing the ground as though in challenge.

I was about to fire, when they galloped toward me again in a determined manner, so I kept them covered and held my fire. At a hundred yards they halted again abruptly, and then I saw that the shaggy mane and high massive forequarters—plus the low carriage of the head—had led me to mistake a couple of wildebeeste bulls for buffalo.

I fired at the chest of the nearest, which dropped in his tracks and lay pawing the earth, roaring in a manner not at all unlike an angry lion. His mate, with tail aloft and head lowered, whirled round and made off in the direction he had come from. But he went only twenty yards, then whirled again and halted about thirty paces from his fallen mate.

As he stood broadside on, I aimed carefully behind the shoulder and fired, dropping him where he stood. Under the impression that the first one down was dead, I went toward the second, and had covered about fifty yards when he suddenly jumped up and

headed for the bush at top speed. A hasty shot was ineffective, and I turned toward the one which had first fallen.

Imagine my amazement when I found the spot where he had lain unoccupied! On hurriedly scrutinizing the vlei, I discovered him travelling strongly toward the bush on a line converging on that his mate had taken. The tsessebe had long since departed, so calling my natives we at once took the spoor.

For five miles we followed and twice put up the pair, while blood was plentiful on the trail throughout. But I failed to get another shot, and eventually gave up the pursuit. I had used a .300 soft-nosed bullet, with a striking energy of three thousand foot-pounds and high velocity. It had proved deadly hitherto, and I could only assume that my aim had been defective.

Until 1924, what wildebeeste I shot were secured with capped bullets from a heavy express, and these were always effective. Then circumstances brought me once more up against wildebeeste with the .366, and having registered no mental note on the matter, I again used soft-nosed bullets.

A herd of some forty head were grazing in a small dry pan, on the edge of a bush belt bordering a large plain. By crawling on hands and knees I got within a hundred yards, and fired at the nearest—a large bull—which fell at once. His groaning roars seemed

to indicate a mortal wound, and the herd went off at a gallop. But after traveling a short distance two bulls wheeled round and returned to the edge of the pan, where they halted. I fired at the nearest and brought him down, and as his companion again followed the herd, I walked toward him.

Then the scene of eleven years earlier was repeated. Before I could reach the bull, he jumped to his feet and dashed off, and looking round I discovered that the first one shot had also vanished! Hurrying after the herd, we found them bunched together in the open, and at two hundred fifty yards I fired at one standing a little apart. This animal fell and did not rise again, but it proved to be a cow, and as the blood spoor showed the two bulls were still with the herd, we followed them up.

Eventually I saw a big bull standing apart at about three hundred yards, facing me. I sat down and covered him, and in short rushes he came to within two hundred yards of me, then stood looking straight at me. I fired and he came to his knees, then scrambled up and went off at right angles to the herd. For two miles we followed the blood spoor, but at sunset had failed to come up with him. Then I did a little thinking.

At two hundred fifty yards a cow had fallen for keeps. At a hundred yards two bulls had dropped and then recovered, while another at two

hundred yards—hit fair in the neck, chest or shoulder—had got away! I decided that what was true of the eland bull was true of the wildebeeste bull also. That his solid weight and tough skin prevented penetration by a soft-nosed bullet, and that solids were necessary. I have since found that the tough hide causes the bullet to "mushroom" before reaching a vital organ.

The skin of the bull makes the toughest riems obtainable; so strong that I have known a riem, tying a load on a Scotch cart, to bring a span of twelve bullocks to a halt by catching on the overhanging limb of a tree. When cut, the loose end whirled through the air with a "ping" like a parted hawser, so great had been the tension!

When using a heavy express one morning, a bull fell at the first shot, and as I walked toward him, the herd circled back toward me, but halted two hundred yards away. Then two bulls came galloping down, and looked so ferocious and determined that I sat down to await events. At a hundred yards they halted and stood looking at me, and I fired again. As the one I had aimed at fell, the other dashed away in a small circle, and then headed back toward me, halting at about sixty yards. Curious to see if he meant business, I waited. He came on again to about forty paces; then as he started once more toward me, I fired and put paid to his account.

Whether this habit of wildebeeste is due to stupidity, a spirit of aggression tempered by indecision, or a desire to bluff the enemy into retreat, I have never been able to decide. His massive and shaggy frontal appearance gives him a most formidable aspect as he approaches, and justifies the Dutch name he bears (which means wild cattle); while wounded, and at close quarters, he is undoubtedly dangerous.

My impression is, however, that he has no set purpose in charging, and his object is rather to frighten than to injure. At a mile distance his form may easily be mistaken for either a lion or a buffalo, his high and heavy withers, shaggy mane, and lean sloping hindquarters being reminiscent of either.

Coming to hartebeeste, I first shot a specimen of the Lichtenstein species fifteen years ago. I had often seen them prior to this in Southern Rhodesia and the Bechuanaland Protectorate, but for one reason and another had never hunted them. On this occasion I was returning from an unsuccessful stalk of a troop of eland, when on coming to the edge of a vlei, we saw a patch of bright golden brown in the sunlight. On closer approach this proved to be a troop of about thirty hartebeeste.

Never having seen them at close quarters, I crawled to the edge of the bush and lay watching them for some time. Most of the herd—chiefly cows—were resting, while several bulls and a few

cows with calves were grazing and playing in the vicinity. Cropping the short grass, and making playful rushes at one another, interlocking horns and breaking away again, they rather resembled goats at play, if one imagines goats the size of donkeys!

I at once noted the head-shaking to which I have referred. An animal, quietly feeding, would break off abruptly and spring several times into the air, shaking his head vigorously as though to rid himself of some incubus. The first time this happened I thought the animal had been bitten by a snake. The sudden jump, and violent headshake, being exactly what one would expect in an animal bitten on the nose while grazing.

Seeing this frequently repeated, I asked my native for an explanation, and he whispered that it was "something in the head which bit the animal." This was the best he could do by way of explanation, but later, he brought me a handful of fat maggots about an inch long, to illustrate his meaning. He also showed me others in the brain cavity from which these were taken. It may be noted that all three species here dealt with seem very uneasy about the head, and rather stupid. I may add that I bar "brain fritters" from any of these!

This hartebeeste is a vivid brown in color—the bull being almost red—turning to creamy white on buttocks and abdomen. The bull averages about two



BUSHBUCK

hundred fifty pounds dead weight, and the cow about fifty to a hundred pounds less. Both male and female carry horns, these being short, thick and annulated at the base, with a sharp backward curve. The most prominent characteristics are the long ugly face, large ears and ewe neck. In general they are the ugliest hunk in the veldt, except the wildebeeste.

They are by no means vigilant, and are usually easily killed. Yet a hartebeeste stands out in my recollection as the most difficult animal to kill, I ever met with. I came across a bull one morning in Nyassaland, standing alone in a forest glade, and at two hundred yards I aimed behind the shoulder and fired, using a .303 target rifle.

A startled jump, and away he went. We followed for three miles, and eight times I sighted him and fired. When at last we found him stretched out on his side, he made a final effort to rise, and I put another bullet through the heart. I had naturally assumed that most of my shots had missed, but what was my amazement to find ten bullet holes in the animal! In addition to the last shot, there were bullets in shoulder, lungs, liver, abdomen and hind-quarters!

This was the only occasion when I used a .303 for hartebeeste, and the only one on which I found more than two cartridges necessary. With this same rifle I had broken the back of a black-maned lion a

month earlier, at nearly three hundred yards! Whether the ammunition was defective, or whether this animal—for some reason—was endowed with superabundant vitality on this occasion, I can not say. The incident illustrates the fact that in the bush one is always learning, and that where game is concerned generalizations are unsafe!

The tsessebe may be dealt with briefly. In size, shape, horns and head, he closely resembles the hartebeeste, and only points of difference need be noted. Chief among these is the range of the species. While they are found in the Bechuanaland Protectorate and Southern Rhodesia, they are seldom met with north of the Zambesi. The only portion of the latter territory where they may be said to be plentiful is that part of Barotseland between the Zambesi and the Cuando Rivers, and the adjoining territory of Southern Angola.

In color they are a slate gray, warmed by a reddish tint, and are rather more graceful than the hartebeeste, as well as much faster. They are also much more weary, and on that account more difficult to stalk and kill. Almost invariably they are found in open country, and when grazing or resting, the bull usually stands a hundred yards or more away from the herd. In addition to sharp vision, his scent is very keen also. When mixed with wildebeeste, the latter seem to rely absolutely upon them as sentinels,

and not without reason. I have often tried to approach wildebeeste under such conditions, without success, the lone tsessebe bull invariably warning the herd and stampeding them, often while I was still half a mile away. When this happens once, it is useless to make a further attempt the same day, and it is as well to return to camp or seek in other directions, unless, of course, one is mounted, in which case the wildebeeste, at any rate, can easily be outpaced.

Roan Antelope in Rhodesia

The roan is called by the Dutch "bastard eland," and the name correctly describes the animal in many ways. A true roan in color, in bright sunlight the coat shows almost gray white; while although his horns are annulated like those of the sable, they are only slightly curved, and about the same length as those of the eland.

In size and weight he nearly equals the buffalo—seven hundred pounds dead weight being common for a large bull—and is the next largest antelope to the eland. So closely does he resemble the latter, that at half a mile distance both natives and myself have often mistaken him for eland, until examination of the spoor showed our mistake. His head, with its black and white facial markings, is a facsimile of the sable's, except in the shape of the horns; and in view of bodily differences this is somewhat remarkable.

He presents, in fact, just the appearance the progeny of a sable bull and eland cow might be expected to present. May not some such miscegenation in the past have resulted in this apparently distinct species?

Like the eland, the bull frequently wanders alone in winter, though in herd strength he shows the characteristics of the sable, seldom being found in troops of more than thirty or forty, while the eland congregates in herds of two hundred or more. Unlike either sable or eland, however, he is often found in company with other species, generally with zebra, wildebeeste or tsessebe.

Roan is probably the most plentiful and widely distributed of all large antelope to-day, being found everywhere north of Mafeking, from the east to the west coast. He is much less cautious than sable or eland, and may be shot with less expenditure of skill and energy, often being found resting on the open plains at midday. He has, however, remarkably good eyesight, and under such conditions three hundred yards is usually the nearest range to which the hunter may approach.

Much has been said and written about the attacks of wounded roan, but although he *does* sometimes attack, he prefers running to fighting wherever possible. When he *does* show fight, however, he is likely to cause considerable damage owing to the shape of his

horns. He has only to lower his head slightly to present to the foe two sharp and formidable points, and many a dog whose zeal has outrun discretion, has been impaled. But only twice in my experience has the roan shown any disposition to attack.

The first time was about fourteen years back. I had dropped a bull standing in open forest country, at about a hundred fifty yards' range, and a raw native with me raced forward to complete the job. When five or six yards from the fallen bull, the latter suddenly got to his feet facing the native. The boy hurled his assegai, and the weapon penetrated the thick skin of the neck. With the spear depending from the wound, the enraged beast charged the native, who gave a startled yell and fled. Luckily I was not far behind, and having covered him as he rose, I placed a bullet behind the shoulder which brought him down again, only six feet behind the native! It turned out that my first bullet had lodged in the neck, and had merely stunned the animal.

The second occasion was quite recently, and curiously enough was again the result of a neck shot. This time I was myself the object of attack, but as on the former occasion, carelessness in going too close, and approaching from the front, were bigger contributory causes than any natural pugnacity in the animal.

I had fired at a large bull, using a .366 soft-nosed

bullet, from a distance of three hundred yards. He fell on the spot, and when I reached him, was lying with eyes open and fixed, and seemed to be breathing his last. I turned my attention in the direction his companions had taken across the flat, and had stood watching them for perhaps a minute, when the native with me cried in Kaffir: "Be careful, master, he's getting up!"

Turning sharply, I noted the hitherto fixed eyelids blinking rapidly, and while I quickly retreated about five paces, the big fellow came to his feet. As I aligned the sights, his head lowered for the charge: but as he started toward me the bullet reached his brain, and he fell for the last time. Examination showed that the first shot had passed through the fleshy part of the neck, and remained embedded in the skin on the opposite side. This had apparently stunned the creature for fully three minutes, and the effect had then worn off.

On discovering this, I remembered tales of American hunters "creasing" (stunning) wild horses, with a bullet through the muscles of the neck. I now saw how easily that might be performed by a crack shot, using small bore bullets, without causing much permanent damage.

A recent newspaper article came to mind also, which described how a lady traveler across Africa had shot an eland bull through the neck with a .275 rifle,

and killed him where he stood. I had doubted the truth of this report, and my doubts were now confirmed. An eland's neck is two or three times the girth of a roan's, and the skin much thicker. In view of the effect of my powerful .366 bullet on the roan, it seemed extremely unlikely that a .275 could penetrate to the vertebrae of an eland; and if it did not, its effect would be negligible. With all big game the hunter is well advised to leave the neck alone and cover the shoulder, unless he is using a heavy caliber, and is a dead shot to boot!

I have said that overzealous dogs frequently get painful or fatal surprises from wounded roan, and partly for this reason I usually hunt without dogs, considering them chiefly as camp guards and companions. Once, however, I enjoyed for a brief spell some real canine assistance. This was given me by a little Irish terrier in pre-war days. Like all terriers, he was tremendously keen and sadly excitable. Whenever I raised my rifle to shoot he could not resist barking furiously, and as this fatally interfered with the shot much patient stalking had secured me, I usually left Terry with natives on a leash, with instructions to release him only when I whistled.

One afternoon I wounded a roan on the Kafue flats, and as, after falling, he recovered his feet and raced two hundred yards before falling again, I decided to give Terry some fun, and released him.

I expected him to bay the animal and bring him to a stand, but instead of that he raced past him and sprang upward like a brown streak, fastening firmly on the animal's nose. For a couple of minutes the bull stood vigorously shaking his head to dislodge the dog, while the small brown body swung to and fro, and the natives sprinted forward with their assegais. Then, comparatively slight as it was, the dog's weight told, and the bull came to his knees. As he did so, the natives reached him, and their assegais completed what the rifle had begun.

This dog had never been trained to hunt, so that his action was purely instinctive; and he was the only one I have known who accomplished so neat and clean a seizure. Several I have owned have attempted it, and suffered for the attempt. Many hunters have lost numerous well-bred dogs in roan encounters, and it is probable that after the crocodile, the roan stands first as champion dog destroyer of the veld.

Some day an enterprising dog trainer will train a terrier breed in canine ju-jitsu tactics for dealing with large and dangerous game. He will never lack customers!

Apart from the meat, which is only surpassed in quality by that of the eland, the roan has no particular value. The two long sinews extending from shoulder to loin along the back, are unequalled in strength and durability for sewing boots, saddlery, etc., and are

valued by natives. No fat is carried by either roan or sable as a rule, and the hide of the former is inferior to either wildebeeste or eland for making riems. The short horns, too, do not form a trophy of any particular beauty or value. So that on the whole roan should be shot only when meat is required.

CHAPTER II

ANTELOPES OF THE SWAMPS AND RIVERSIDE

OF ALL game found in the neighborhood of streams and rivers, the reedbuck is probably the most widely distributed. In certain parts of Africa eminently suited to it as a habitat, however, it no longer exists owing to native hunting methods, and its lack of defense against them.

In Southern Rhodesia and Barotseland, the reedy swamps the animal loves—and from which it takes its name—are usually within a mile or two of thick timber, and in many cases even within a few hundred yards of it. In such environment the reedbuck makes for the thick timber when pursued, and in districts much hunted, often lies up for the day in the bush bordering the valley. This gives him a chance to escape, equal to that of the bush-dwelling antelope. In Angola, and in the Barotse Valley proper, where the swamps extend for miles on either side of the stream, he usually rests for the day in any patch of reeds where the ground is dry, and this has led to his destruction.

In Angola, especially, one may travel for hundreds of miles on the borders of rivers and huge flats, without seeing a single reedbuck. The natives have few firearms, but their methods of hunting are much more destructive than that of the rifle, as will appear in the description given in this book, of native hunting methods in general.

In Northern Rhodesia generally—as in Southern—the reedbuck is fairly common. The male has lyrate, annulated horns, of anything from ten to sixteen inches on the curve; a rather rough, light fawn coat, very large ears, and a spreading bushy tail, white on the under side. His habit of carrying this latter spread upward like a fan when in flight, distinguishes him at once from other animals similar in build and color. With ordinary caution he is not difficult to approach; but if startled, he can travel at great speed.

The dead weight of a ram is about eighty to a hundred twenty pounds. The doe weighs about fifty pounds less as a rule, and has no horns, but is otherwise similar in appearance. Curiously enough, while the flesh of other riverside and swamp-dwelling animals is either quite uneatable, or very coarse, that of the reedbuck is superior to any of the bush species except roan and eland, and is quite equal to the former of these in quality.

Generally speaking, the reedbuck is easily killed, but I remember one occasion when a female of the

species evinced extraordinary vitality. I remember it with regret; but as it may have its interest for natural history students and others, I will include it here.

Coming one morning to the edge of a vlei, I saw a single reedbuck ewe grazing in the open, about three hundred yards away. As I needed meat, and had seen nothing else, I fired, using a soft-nosed bullet. She jumped away and raced past me up the vlei, eventually turning into a belt of reeds on the river bank. I thought I had missed her, but disliking to leave a wounded animal in the veld, I walked out on the vlei and took the spoor to make sure.

I had gone only about fifty yards when I found a newly born reedbuck lying on the spoor, with eyes open, and breathing in gasps. The mother had evidently expelled it in flight—perhaps owing to the shock of the bullet—which I afterward found had gone through the stomach. A rap on the head ended the little creature's brief pain, and we followed up the mother, deciding that in her wounded condition, a finishing bullet was the only mercy possible.

As we entered the belt of reeds, there was a rush and a splash, and a moment later we saw the reedbuck racing down the opposite bank of the river. While we watched, she traveled about five hundred yards, and then fell headlong. With some trouble we managed to ford the river and followed up. When within a hundred yards of her, she again jumped up and dashed off, disappearing in a belt of reeds by the

water's edge about three hundred yards lower down. When we arrived there was no sign of her, and the blood spoor showed that she had taken to the river.

Eventually my natives found her a mile down-stream, with her head caught in a tangle of driftwood, and quite dead. From the time she was shot, she had traveled a mile at racing speed, swum a river, given premature birth to a fawn, and then swum or drifted a mile down-stream! A wonderful instance of vitality, but one I have no desire to see repeated. I have since been very chary of shooting females of species which have no regular breeding season.

One other characteristic of the reedbuck may be mentioned. This is his habit, when alarmed, of sharply stamping his hoof, and emitting a shrill whistle. He does this also when challenging a rival, and the whistle is often heard at night when camped in the vicinity of vleis; but just how it is contrived, appears to be still a subject of controversy.

About Waterbuck

Waterbuck are found in country adjacent to nearly all the big rivers in Northern Rhodesia and adjoining territories; but unlike the reedbuck, this animal spends most of the daylight hours in bush country. Where plentiful, he roams in troops of twenty to fifty; whereas reedbuck usually travel and live in troops of four to eight only.

The waterbuck is very vigilant, and difficult to

approach. If I were asked to describe his color in a word, I could not do so. I have killed animals almost jet black in color, and others of a steel gray. This color variation applies to both sexes, exactly as it does in donkeys, and except for the horns, and a more graceful appearance, the animal strongly resembles a donkey. Indeed, a troop of females—which do not carry horns—might well be mistaken for a troop of the “tattered outlaws” at a distance.

The ram is rather a handsome creature when endowed with a black coat, being rather larger than a donkey, and carrying an imposing pair of lyrate, annulated horns, much larger than a reedbuck's and pointing forward.

I am not an Irishman, but may remark that the first waterbuck I “got,” I *didn't* “get.” I shot this animal half a mile from the Zambesi River, and followed the blood spoor to the bank, only to find that he had jumped into the stream. Diligent search failed to discover him, and I am afraid that I did my pet enemy—the crocodile—an involuntary good turn!

The next I shot was in bush country, and afforded me a practical illustration of the waterbuck's chief value, viz., the toughness of his hide. One of my natives attempted to drive his assegai into the neck of the already dead animal, with the result that the steel point doubled up, and the weapon rebounded as though from india-rubber!

In days when ox transport was universal in South Africa, waterbuck skins were eagerly sought for the manufacture of ox strops, and a set of such strops was said to withstand ten years' hard service. From my own experience of the transport road I can well believe it.

The flesh is very coarse and stringy, and almost flavorless; yet when made into biltong (sun-dried meat) it is fully equal to that of any other antelope. The cooking seems to have a deleterious effect upon it, while salting and sun-drying does not.

I have stressed the resemblance of the waterbuck to the donkey; but there is one outstanding difference in his coloring. This is the distinct white circle around the buttocks, from which the animal takes his Dutch name. That name is very appropriate, but like many Dutch names, is somewhat suggestive of vulgarity in its literal English translation.

Puku

The puku closely resembles the reedbuck in size, shape of horns, and in habits and habitat. He is, however, much less widely distributed, and in many places where reedbuck is common, he is seldom found. In coloring he is almost bright red, and his coat is very rough and shaggy, in this respect resembling the waterbuck rather than the reedbuck. His flesh, too, is much like that of the former and is, if anything,

even coarser in grain and more flavorless. But this, too, becomes palatable if made into biltong.

I first met these animals on the Kafue flats, and only a few miles from the railway station. In the distance I mistook them for reedbuck, in spite of the more vivid color, and fired under that impression. When the animal dropped, I walked out on the flats to secure it, intending to carry the meat into the bush, and send for it next morning, as I had only one native with me, and it was near sunset.

These flats are inundated by the river in flood time, and covered with masses of flattened reeds and other debris, as well as pools of water. I commenced skinning operations, and was about half-way through when the sun set. Immediately, the mosquitoes arose in clouds and attacked en masse, somewhat after the manner of swarming bees! For five minutes I endeavored to carry on, but found it impossible, and finally grabbed my rifle and raced for the bush, leaving even my knife beside the buck!

Next morning I found a wandering hyena had enjoyed the fruits of my labor, and the curses of my native received silent but none the less hearty endorsement from myself! The "shock tactics" of the mosquitoes, and the sequel, fixed my first meeting with puku in my memory!



PLAND

Lechwe

The red lechwe is fairly common on all the large swamps—as in Barotseland—but is seldom found on the smaller rivers, since, unlike waterbuck and reedbuck, he never enters the bush, but seeks cover for his daylight rest among the long grass and reeds of the open flats.

The male alone carries horns, these being very similar in shape to those of the waterbuck, but smaller. His rough red coat resembles that of the puku rather than the reedbuck, but turns to pure white on belly and flank. The skin is greatly prized by native women; who use it to carry their children in—when “*braided*” soft. This they do by fastening one end round their waists, and the other round their necks, the youngster straddling their waist with his legs, and being supported behind by the skin. Whether the preference is for its color or texture I can not say; but these natives will pay five shillings for a lechwe skin, and nothing at all for that of the other animals mentioned!

The flesh of the ewe is quite good eating, but that of the ram is, as a rule, very rank in flavor, and somewhat coarse in grain. The sharply defined difference in the flesh of these animals is rather remarkable, since all must—of necessity—eat the same class of vegetation. At one time I thought the excellence of the reedbuck’s flesh due to his mixed grazing between

bush and vleis; but since the waterbuck spends even more time than the reedbuck in the bush, that explanation seems unsatisfactory. It may be significant that of all these swamp dwellers only the reedbuck has a fine haired skin. His coat is sleek, where all the others are rough.

Lechwe hunting is often hard and unpleasant work. In Angola I have found them in swamps where one was obliged to follow for miles across masses of tangled vegetation which—while presenting a firm appearance—swayed and quaked as one walked over it, in a manner reminiscent of the Nile Sud. At intervals one would break through this and become immersed to the waist in icy cold water! Under such conditions the lechwe bag is certainly well earned, and is, moreover, difficult to obtain.

In the swamps there is a species of black lechwe which is described as a very handsome buck, but difficult to obtain. Probably the conditions just described obtain there also. The black lechwe is never found, however, south of the great lakes, and the latter are outside my experience.

Sitatunga

The sitatunga is the handsomest of all the swamp dwellers I have seen, but is extremely difficult to shoot. Indeed, one seldom sees a specimen. He is sometimes called the lesser koodoo, and he can be found in small

numbers on the Cuando River, between Lake Ngami and Barotseland, and in a few places along the Zambesi.

It is seldom that he is killed either by whites or natives owing to the fact that he rarely leaves the swamps by day or night. Equipped with abnormally long hoofs, especially adapted to travel in soft mud and water, pursuit is very difficult in the dense reeds unless a hunt with plenty of assistance is especially organized for that purpose. I have only occasionally heard of one being shot in Barotseland, and only once have I seen a captured specimen.

This was a youngster which was for some time in Livingstone awaiting transit to the zoo. It was a very handsome little creature with a glossy black coat, and like most captured antelopes, remarkably friendly and docile. Mention is only made of the animal here because of all the swamp-dwelling antelope he is the species the majority of hunters desire most—and fail—to secure.

CHAPTER III

STALKING SABLE ANTELOPE

I HAVE given the sable antelope a separate short chapter in this book because he alone of all the antelopes has provided the thrill of adventure, unwittingly, during my quest of him. Also, he is the only antelope I have known to evince a paternal affection toward a calf at all commensurate with the maternal.

His description and habits may be briefly dealt with. He may be found anywhere north of Mafeking, in certain localities, but has only a local range. Great tracts of country are entirely destitute of sable for no apparent reason. He generally prefers deep forest country, and although occasionally met with on the vleis, most of his time is spent amid the timber. His herd strength ranges from twenty to fifty, and the bulls travel separately in winter.

The bull is strikingly handsome. His body is covered with jet black silky hair, save on the belly, where it turns to pure white. His head is marked—like the roan's—with longitudinal alternating stripes of white and black, and is surmounted by thick an-

nulated horns, from thirty to forty-eight inches on the curve. These sweep backward in scimitar fashion until the points depend over the withers.

In Angola there is a species called the "giant sable," which carries horns up to sixty inches on the curve, but with no greater bodily development, a bull going about four to five hundred pounds dead weight. The bull is reputed a fighter, but like the roan, prefers running to fighting if possible, though indiscreet action by dogs and men has often led to attack. The skin of the bull along the back and neck is very thick, and ox whips are usually made from it, since the giraffe skin formerly used has become scarce.

The first time I encountered sable was also the occasion of an adventure. Coming upon spoor soon after dawn in a deep forest belt, we decided to follow, and soon after ten o'clock the native with me whistled softly and pointed to a bush ahead. After a while I made out a black and white face looking at me through the leafy screen, and kneeling down, aimed at the bush where I imagined it covered the chest.

As I fired, the face disappeared, but at the same instant a yellow, black-spotted ball of snarling fury dropped to earth from a tree about thirty yards ahead, and whirled round into the bush. A leopard had been ambushed there, and the native assured me that had I not fired he would probably have dropped on the shoulders of one of us. However that may have

been—and I have reason to doubt it—I felt some gratitude to the sable which occasioned the shot.

Following up, we found the herd had been resting and had now doumped with the wounded sentry bull. After following for several miles, and planting several more shots, we eventually secured our quarry.

On another occasion we cut new spoor at dawn, and an examination of the dew traces on the broken leaves convinced us that the herd had passed during the early hours of the morning. We decided to follow, on the off-chance of finding them resting. After several miles, we suddenly found a huge lion spoor cutting the tracks of the herd. Studying this, we saw that Leo had stood for some time making up his mind about the spoor, and had then decided to follow. This did not promise well for our success, but curious to see the result, we joined the procession.

After some miles we came to the edge of a large vlei, and here—while the sable tracks kept straight on—the lion spoor turned to the left and followed the edge of the vlei, but keeping within the bush. At several points the flattened sand, and claw marks, showed where he had lain down and watched, so that he had evidently arrived while the game was feeding.

Farther on we came to the place where his attack had been made. A large flat depression in the sand showed where he had pressed his body hard against the ground; in front were the marks of his claws as

he had dragged himself forward an inch at a time; then the deep depressions of his hind pads as they gripped the earth under him for the spring; scattered sand and leaves, and a spreading hind spoor indicated his take-off. We walked out to inspect his landing.

The spoor showed that the herd had watered, and were returning to enter the same belt at the point where the lion waited unknown to them; and ahead of them walked a large bull. Coming to within fifteen yards of the forest's edge, the leader had grown suspicious and halted, turning broadside to the bush. In that instant the watching lion had sprung. But the bull had made a magnificent bound at the same moment, and wheeling, had led the herd at the gallop toward the opposite bush belt.

With a surveyor's tape I carried, we measured the lion's spring, and found it a little over forty-five feet, a magnificent effort truly—though it may have been helped by the slight rise from which he sprang—and one which deserved better luck. However, we felt we deserved sympathy ourselves, so wasted very little on Leo, since it was obviously useless to follow the herd farther after their scare. The insight I had gained into the skill and patience of the hunting lion's methods was some consolation, however.

The instance of paternal affection occurred in Portuguese East Africa to a friend of mine. Since I saw the calf, and the photograph of him beside his

dead sire, its authenticity is beyond doubt. My friend in conducting wagon transport went out to look for meat one afternoon and came upon the tracks of a large and solitary sable bull. Eventually he found him in an open glade, and was very surprised to see a young bull calf beside him.

He fired and dropped the bull, and then, as the youngster refused to quit the body, he photographed the pair. Afterward, his natives captured the calf without much trouble. It lived about a month, and then—as commonly happens—it developed stomach trouble and died, just as it was becoming quite tame. What led to that solitary bull acting as dry nurse, we can never know!

It may be added that at birth the calf is bright red in color and remains so for about a year. The cows never altogether lose the reddish tinge.

CHAPTER IV

SCAVENGERS OF EARTH, AIR AND WATER

Hyenas

I THINK it was in a story by F. St. Mars, that the author endowed the lion with speech, and the great cat used it to express his detestation of the hyena. His hatred was due to his instinctive knowledge that the cowardly creature would one day feed upon his body!

To some extent I share Leo's prejudice, but chiefly on account of his furtive cowardice and the lugubrious vocal efforts of his breed. My ultimate aversion is reserved for the crocodile, for reasons which will appear. I think any one who has heard the mournful howls with which the hyena makes night hideous, must of necessity dislike the beast, but I was surprised to find natives evince actual fear of him. Some, indeed, are more afraid of him than of the lion!

Years ago I had proved his cowardice in the following manner, at my first meeting with him in the

Katanga, and the incident had left on my mind only contempt.

The hotel at Sakania, the first station in Belgian territory, was just opposite the railway station, and the proprietor combined a butcher's business with that of licensed victualer. Twenty yards behind the hotel stood the butchery, a building with walls made of reeds. One night while a number of us sat talking in the hotel, we heard a snarl and scuffle in the yard, and as we ran out to investigate, several large animals about the size of mastiffs dashed through the wire fence and scampered up the road in the moonlight.

Examination showed that they had made an aperture in the reed wall of the slaughter-house, and had extracted the foot of an ox, several of which stood against the walls. This had apparently induced the quarrel which had disturbed us.

Half an hour later, I was going home up the same road the animals had taken, when I met four of them returning. They halted and looked at me, and having no weapon I waved my arms and shouted. They at once turned tail and ran a few yards, then stopped and looked back. This was repeated several times, and at last I walked right past them where they stood in the bush. Later that night, they returned to the butchery and removed two more feet and some scraps of meat. After this experience I decided that their apparent boldness was merely insolence!

When, therefore, I subsequently went to Harar-land, I was inclined to deride the natives' fear of the hyena. They explained that it was due to the creature's habit of sneaking up to a sleeping man and taking a swift slashing bite, as he ran somewhat after the fashion of an Australian dingo with sheep! Since inquiries showed that this had frequently happened, their fear became comprehensible, the more so as the hyena has a set of teeth and a jaw as powerful as a lion's!

On several occasions since then, I have known hyenas to creep silently in between my wagon oxen and chew up strops and riems—made from game hides—which attached the cattle to the yokes, while thirty natives and myself slept close by! The oxen seemed to consider them beneath contempt and gave no alarm; while the brutes never attacked the cattle.

A man I knew in Barotseland had a captured cub, and the animal evinced the same queer mixture of cowardice and insolence. He would constantly annoy one by persistent familiarities—looking up pleadingly, meanwhile, with watery blue eyes—but at a single harsh word he would scuttle away to cover like a frightened rabbit, only to return and repeat the offense five minutes later!

The "lion's jackal" is a proverbial figure of speech, but in the districts where lions are found to-day there are few jackals, and the "lion's hyena" would most

often truly express the facts. Very often indeed is the lion's deep grunt echoed or preceded by the hyena's mournful howl. On one occasion, in Nyassaland, this combination resulted in an unpleasant night for my wife and myself.

We were traveling from Blantyre to Fort Jameson in a Ford car purchased from the military authorities. Late in the afternoon a "big-end ran out" when we were thirty miles from any white habitation. By the time we had fitted a new connecting rod, the sun had set. A previous accident had put the starting gear out of action, so my wife and I started to push the car; but the ground being level and sandy, we could not obtain the momentum to start the engine.

When darkness fell, we were exhausted, and while wondering what to do next, a hyena suddenly gave tongue about a mile away. Immediately afterward came the deep tones of a lion, as though in answer or challenge, and we hastily started back down the road to a native village we had passed, some four miles behind us. There we passed the night lying on the ground in the open, without supper or blankets!

On numerous occasions I have noticed a similar phenomenon, and have often wondered whether the hyena attracts the lion, in the hope of sharing his kill, or whether he is merely expostulating at being driven from a stolen meal. Most probably the latter.

Vultures and Eagle-Hawks

If we include the hawks, great and small, which are so numerous in Africa, scavengers of the air would form a numerous contingent indeed. As the hawks kill meat for themselves, however—like the crocodile—in addition to feeding on any dead body they may find, perhaps the vulture is the only true scavenger. He is at any rate the most efficient!

Every one who has traveled the African bush has noted with amazement the swift appearance of these birds, and speculated on the cause of it. The consensus of opinion attributes it to marvelous powers of sight.

However that may be, it is certain that within a very short time of a kill they materialize in scores and hundreds out of a clear sky. With prey in sight they show little fear of man, and I have often skinned animals while scores of them sat patiently watching on the trees, or strutting about quarreling on the ground near by!

On one occasion I had shot three wildebeeste bulls, and while two were being skinned simultaneously, they attacked the third—lying a hundred yards away—in such numbers that I had to mount guard over it. Even then I found both eyes and several strips of the tough hide gone, in the space of a few minutes!

One other instance remains in my memory,

however, as outstanding evidence of their efficiency as scavengers and their unerring instinct for meat. I had shot a big roan bull about five miles from camp one morning, and not having enough natives to carry all of it, I sent one back for more, immediately. An hour was spent in skinning and dressing the meat, and then we placed the whole forequarters, neck, head and stomach, between two shady trees, and covered it with bush, removing every scrap of meat from the open. When we left with the hindquarters, not a bird was in sight, and being well covered, we imagined the balance safe, it being practically invisible from the air.

Two miles from camp we met the natives I had sent for, so that not more than two hours elapsed between our departure and their arrival at the scene of the kill. Yet they found every bone picked clean, the bushes scattered, and the place alive with vultures. The birds must have disposed of quite one hundred fifty pounds of meat in that time!

Had the natives not brought the bones to show me, I would not have believed their story. But every bone was picked clean as only vultures can pick them, and I can only assume that they watched our skinning operations from a height beyond our vision, and came down as soon as we departed, since, as stated, we left the meat invisible!

The vulture is protected by law, and as he never

takes life, and performs a useful service, this is perhaps advisable. As natives invariably follow the sign of their presence, however, and remove what meat they find, it is probable that the vulture has his own problems of existence!

Of the hawks, one only need be mentioned. This is the great eagle-hawk, called by the Dutch "*lam-mervanger*" (lambcatcher). This bird is the bane of a poultry keeper's existence in the veld. Materializing suddenly out of a clear sky, almost as unexpectedly as the vulture, he drops like a stone. One hears a thud and a squawk, and next instant he is gone, with a Leghorn fowl, or even a large Muscovy duck, in his powerful talons. On one occasion a hawk struck one of the latter within a few yards of me. I drove him off, but the duck was already dead, the talons and beak having penetrated through the back to the internal organs.

Ducks, well-bred fowls, etc., are the chief victims. The Kaffir fowls, bred in the veld, are much too wary as a rule, and seek cover in time. It becomes obvious in the bush that among all creatures—as with mankind—a little experience is worth a lot of instinct, using the latter term in the sense of intuition!

The Crocodile

It is often said that crocodiles are found only in rivers running from east to west or vice versa. My

experience is that north of the Zambesi, at any rate, they are found in *all* rivers. Often, indeed, they have been discovered in pools on farms, many miles from any large river. This has given rise to the erroneous belief that they travel overland. The fact is that when hatched an instinctive knowledge of the cannibalistic habits of their species induces them to seek sanctuary in the first small stream they come to, and to remain there until large enough to defend themselves.

Sometimes, owing to a plentiful food supply, they outstay the period strictly necessary; or again, an adult may enter a side stream during the rains, in search of better fare, and stay so long that when he would return to the main stream he finds the river dry for miles. So the farmer is surprised one day to find a well-grown crocodile in a pool flanked on either hand by miles of dry river-bed!

The stories told of crocodiles being met with traveling overland, may be taken as apocryphal. It is practically certain that they leave such pools as described, during the rainy season, when the dry river-bed is temporarily filled. It is rather fortunate in view of their fecundity that many of the youngsters are hatched only to be devoured. On the Cuando River I have found as many as forty-eight eggs deposited by a single female!

A damp shady spot in the sand, a few yards from

the river, had been selected; and the imprint of the crocodile's belly scales showed where to dig. Layer upon layer, about four or five inches to a foot deep, carefully packed with sand between each separate egg, they had been placed with a skill and care an expert grocer could not have excelled. Had they been left undisturbed, probably the majority would have hatched out.

One wonders, in that case, whether the female which deposited them would have revisited the scene of her labors, either to safeguard her brood, or to eat some of them. As it was, my natives ate them. They simply boiled them, peeled off the shell, and ate the contents; which looked like a hard-boiled duck's egg at first sight. The difference was in the absence of any yolk, the eggs being dull white throughout.

My strong aversion to crocodiles is based on two grounds. In the first place, they forbid the luxury of a swim, in a climate where the temperature makes the temptation a fascinating one, and in the second, they show a particular preference for dogs as diet. The poor canine creatures feel the temptation to bathe as keenly as their masters, and lacking human foresight and restraint, they succumb to it. As a result, I have lost many good and faithful canine friends, and in revenge, I never lose a chance to shoot one of the reptiles.

It is seldom, however, that one recovers the body.

Their activity is amazing. I have shot one fair and true through the "armpit," on a sandbank fifteen yards from the water's edge, where he lay asleep in the sunlight. The movement which landed him in the water was so quick that the eye could scarcely follow it! One convulsive leap, a splash, a glint of a yellow-white belly, a feeble good-by wave of a short foreleg, and he had vanished to receive the attentions of his cannibalistic fellows!

A missionary once told me that the biggest crocodile so far secured by a museum was only fourteen feet long. I can only conclude that he was misinformed. I have myself seen them in the neighborhood of twenty feet, and in April, 1901, the *Bulawayo Chronicle* reported the killing of one near Gwelo which was twenty-four feet long!

Strangely enough, although alligators are farmed in America for their hides, there seems to be no market for the belly skin of the crocodile, which should be at least equal in value for manufacturing purposes. If such a market existed, crocodile hunting in Africa might become a profitable business for those who know the reptile's habits. It would be one at which few would cavil, in view of the toll of human and animal life exacted by him. Countless natives, as well as wild creatures, oxen and other domestic animals, yearly swell the list of his victims; and the death he inflicts is a very cruel one!

Deadly silent in his approach, and swift as a flash of lightning in attack, even a large ox has small chance of escape from the great jaws, when once dragged into deep water. Yet the reptile has a gullet so small that he can swallow only small morsels of solid food. He conceals the bodies of the larger animals in the reeds below the surface until they decompose, before he can enjoy them!

It seems, too, that to assimilate even this diet, he needs aid to digestion. In every specimen I have recovered, I have found a number of smooth, round, transparent pebbles in the stomach, and this characteristic is utilized by prospectors. In Angola, where diamonds are alluvial, and found on almost all rivers, some prospectors I have known used to shoot crocs systematically, and examine the stomach contents to ascertain the nature of the river-bed, and on the off-chance that the saurian might have picked up a diamond!

Few people seem to be aware that the crocodile has no tongue. There is a fleshy protuberance incapable of lateral movement, which slides back into the throat when the jaws open; acting somewhat like a valve, and that is all. Natives say that the iguana is the brother of the crocodile, and stole his tongue long ago; which explains his possession of the long forked member which natives maintain is "two tongues"!

Recently a Rhodesian paper published the experiences of a Hollander walking through Africa. The traveler is reported as stating that at one point of his journey he lived on crocodile's tongues and hippo steaks. Since the former has no tongue, and the natives had no firearms to kill the latter, he must have been hungry fairly frequently!

CHAPTER V

NATIVE HUNTING METHODS

THE Union Government's decision to establish National Parks as game sanctuaries, was applauded by all lovers of African fauna. Most people regarded the step as one calculated to check the destructive proclivities of the white man—armed with the modern rifle—and few realize how infinitely more dangerous to wild life preservation are the native hunting methods.

Already that danger has been made apparent, the natives in the adjoining Portuguese territory having caused endless trouble and, in some cases, the death of native guards by their poaching activities. To make control effective will demand great vigilance from an enlarged staff and the prohibition of all settlement in the vicinity.

Since the game has been driven into circumscribed areas, far from civilization, the native has become a far greater danger to its continued existence than the white man. Civilization itself—though unarmed and inoffensive—is yet an invader before which wild life

flees, just as surely as from the rifle's attack. The primitive native's destructive power has increased with the mobilizing of the herds in the remote areas he himself occupies. It is safe to assert that eighty per cent. of the game destroyed to-day, is destroyed by natives; and a large proportion of it by natives without modern weapons.

The number of white hunters, and the amount of their execution, is decided in these days by the leisure they possess. Even north of the Zambesi a hunt involves at least a month taken from farming or business pursuits. Elsewhere, it may mean anything from three to six months. Trophies of commercial value are limited in amount by statute, and the Administration takes a portion of their value in the form of licenses, duties, etc., so that hunting is no longer a business proposition.

But neither considerations of time, nor financial arithmetic influence the native: and no regulations restrict his hunting activities. It is argued by those who deplore his destruction of game—and profess inability to prevent it—that he owns the country he inhabits. Thus he, who through the centuries has failed to develop strength to hold *anything*, enjoys freedom to flout the white man's esthetic, humanitarian and moral principles, and does so increasingly and successfully. Perhaps the freedom he has enjoyed in this respect has engendered contempt for

any law having game preservation for its object! In all probability those Portuguese natives regard the establishment of a game reserve on their border as a special dispensation for their benefit!

In Northern Rhodesia a native may be fined for cruelty to a white man's ox, but is immune from punishment for the most barbarous slaughter of his own, or of wild game. Consequently, any cruelty involved by his methods does not detract from their value in his eyes; and some are very cruel. I propose to deal with those employed by the more primitive tribes. In addition to these, the Barotse and Bechuana natives are in possession of many modern express rifles, and slaughter hundreds of head annually, from small buck to elephants.

Throughout Rhodesia, Angola, Portuguese East Africa and Nyassaland, the common methods are the snare—consisting of noose and twigs, or bent sapling—and the game pit. In Northern Rhodesia and the Bechuanaland Protectorate these are supplemented by the rifle and "drive"; in Angola, by the muzzle-loader, bow and arrow, and drive; in Tanganyika by the staked elephant pit. The noose method is less barbarous than the others, and less destructive, though its victims are surprisingly numerous. Leaving out the smaller snares for duiker, steenbock and birds—which are found on every footpath—the method is as follows.

A patch of grass a hundred yards in circumference is burned off immediately after the rains, and later—when it is covered with a green carpet of new grass—surrounded with fences of thorn-bush. Perhaps half a dozen narrow entrances are left in this, and at each a strong sapling is planted four to six feet deep in the earth, the top is bent over and a stout rope attached. The noosed end is spread just beneath the loose earth in the entrance, and the strain taken on a notch cut in a strong peg, driven into the path and hidden by earth.

The hungry animals make for the tempting pasture by the most obvious route, a foot presses the earth in the center of the noose, and its forward stride carries the latter with it, and jerks it free of the notch. The sapling springs erect, and next instant the animal stands on hind legs, with a foreleg suspended in the air—or sometimes vice-versa.

Reedbuck, lechwe, tsessebe and hartebeeste are most often caught in this way, but so strong are the snares that I have known a young roan bull fail to break them! On that occasion he was found at dawn in company with two reedbuck, awaiting the destroying assegaïs.

But this method is neither so cruel nor so destructive as the pits and drives. The former are almost as numerous as the snares. The method in Rhodesia is to choose an area where several game paths converge



HARTEBEESTE

within a mile or two of the water to which they lead; then a long fence of brushwood and thorn is constructed across the whole frontage for a mile or so, and extended in lateral wings enclosing the outside paths of the group for two hundred yards or more.

Where the several paths reach the transverse fence, a narrow opening is left, and in this a pit, about eight feet deep and the same in length, is constructed in the path. At the top it is four feet wide, but narrows abruptly as it goes down, to about eighteen inches at the bottom. This pit is covered with thin sticks at right angles, and on these is laid a thick screen of grass over all its length. It then presents exactly the appearance of the "beds" of native carriers seen in thousands of deserted bivouacs all over the country.

The game comes at night in single file along the paths. They find themselves in a brushwood enclosure through which the path leads straight to the water they have come many miles to seek. The result is never in doubt. If the animal is a reedbuck he may pitch headlong, and be found wedged head downward in the pit; fortunate indeed if he has broken his neck. But the larger animals—roan, sable, eland, etc.,—almost invariably fall feet first, and their own weight firmly wedges them between the shelving sides of the pit.

The feet never reach the bottom. At every

struggle the heavy body becomes more tightly compressed, until breathing is only possible in painful gasps. Yet these unfortunates often live throughout a day and night in such extremity. The lighter the animal the longer his agony. I have found two waterbuck, a roan and a hartebeeste, in pits separated by yards only, on the same morning! The roan had been the last victim and was dead. The hartebeeste—at least twenty-four hours in the pit—was still breathing. One waterbuck was alive, with all four legs upward; and the other already decomposing! For the natives do not visit the pits daily. That would be too much trouble! They do not object to a "gamey" flavor, and often do not inspect the traps for days at a time!

On the Cuando River—the western border of Barotseland—a hunter one morning found two giraffe in specially prepared pits, with broken legs. Yet he, in possession of a fifty-pound license was not allowed to shoot even one specimen! The official wisacres are under the impression that they strictly preserve giraffe, and imagine they exercise a control they can never attain. Even if one reports such occurrences, the usual official reply is: "It's a damned shame, but we can't do anything. It's their country, you know!"

I have often retorted: "Then why worry about the few the white men shoot? They at least kill

mercifully and make some use of the animal! Besides, the native surely owes something for the protection we give him? And what about the principle of one law for all?" But of course such arguments were wasted. Probably the Administration hopes that the elimination of the game may dispose the natives to seek work. In the meantime, the sale of products of the hunt pays their hut tax in many cases. Their unrestricted freedom to destroy game, indeed, makes employment unnecessary for many of them!

In Nyassaland and Portuguese East Africa the pits are prepared in the paths leading to native gardens. These are strongly fenced all round, and apertures left at frequent intervals to invite the game to enter. In each, pits are prepared. The growing crops, and even the residue after reaping, act as a bait for the game.

When transport riding in those countries I was frequently obliged to haul my oxen out of these pits with riems; sometimes twice or thrice in one day. And sometimes I was too late. Officials said they could do nothing regarding game pits in Kaffir gardens. The native was protecting his crops. That the crops had long been reaped, and that in any case a few hefty poles would be a better protection, did not seem to occur to them!

The elephant pits in Tanganyika territory are constructed differently. These are shallow—only about

two feet deep—the same width as the elephant path, and about six feet in length. A number of sharp-pointed ebony stakes are prepared, thick and strong at the base, and several feet in length. Holes are drilled in the bottom of the shallow pit, hard ground being chosen for the trap, and the stakes planted deeply and close together, points uppermost. Then the pit is filled with loose earth and moistened, that it may dry in the heat to an appearance of firmness. Care is taken to touch nothing on the surface with the hands, for the elephant's scent is keen.

Presently the lord of the forest comes down his familiar aisle—a forward step, and with several tons pressure, the sharp-pointed ebony is driven through the sole of the great foot, several stakes entering at the same time. Then the other foot comes forward, seeking a purchase to lift and extricate the first, for around the hole where he has broken through, the earth appears solid. Instantly this also is impaled; his great weight does the rest, and the monarch stands helpless.

Neither trunk nor tusks can help him, for the stakes that hold him prisoner are buried within his feet, and these he can not lift. When the hunters arrive, the heavy leaden bullets from muzzle-loaders at close quarters drain even his mighty strength, and in a few hours he collapses.

Yet in spite of the destruction pits are responsible

for, they come second to the native game drive as a means of denuding a district of game, although undoubtedly the most cruel method. The more primitive the natives, and the fewer guns they possess, the more effective the drives, and the more frequently they occur. This is because leisure is proportionate to the number of essentials the tribe's standard of life entails. It is an ironical fact that whereas a white man's leisure increases with his wealth, the natives enjoy most whose wealth is least! The absolutely raw native possesses an amount which makes "the young man about town" seem a slave by comparison!

Also, the principle: "I'm all right! Damn you, Jack!" is as popular with the blacks as with the whites. Hence the Barotse and Bamangwato tribes, who have learned to desire money, and possess hundreds of modern weapons, plus cattle in abundance, are disinclined to turn out in thousands for days at a time to drive game. In every kraal there is at least one gun, and the head-men are never short of meat, while they have a financial interest in the labor of their subordinates. Why then should they encourage the latter to cease work frequently to drive away and destroy the game they can always secure for themselves? Reasoning thus, their drives are infrequent, and on a small scale.

But in Angola, and certain districts of the Katinga, conditions are different. Even muzzle-loaders

are scarce, and modern high-power rifles non-existent. Their wants are few and easily satisfied. Money is of little value. No aristocratic class has arisen, because none has exclusive possession of any advantage over their fellows. All are "meat-hungry," and all unite in efforts to secure it.

So effective have those efforts been, that in Angola districts extending for hundreds of miles have been denuded of all animal and bird life; and even rats are hunted so persistently that they are almost exterminated! Going westward from Barotseland to the Bihe Plateau, for two hundred fifty miles one travels through such country. Along the motor and railway route from Lobito to the Katanga, and from the Kasai River near Moxico to the Congo southwest border (three hundred miles) game is so scarce that cattle traders are obliged to kill stock for food.

Along the Zambesi where it runs through Portuguese territory, the same holds true. Such game as exists is so wild that a shot is difficult to obtain. In the northwest corner of Barotseland, great herds of game are already being thinned out, owing to the advent within recent years of numbers of these Portuguese natives. On the lower Cuando, where thousands of reedbuck once existed, there are to-day few to be seen!

The method of driving is as follows. Roan, wildebeeste and tsessebe, are chiefly found on the great

plains adjacent to forest belts. Down two sides of the plain throughout its length, long grass is knotted together at the tops, resembling what sailors call a Turk's-head. At intervals, springy saplings are driven into the ground, and the tops ornamented with bundles of bark, all these scarecrows being attached to one another with lengths of bark rope. At one end of the plain—decided by the prevailing wind—a bush barricade a few feet high is prepared on the edge of the timber; and behind it a wide pit is dug and filled with sharp-pointed stakes set at an angle facing the plain.

Then one morning just before sunrise, hundreds of natives armed with steel-tipped arrows, assegais, muzzle-loaders, etc., secrete themselves in the bush around the pit, while others take position in the grass on the plain and hold the end of the ropes attached to the dummy figures. Soon after sunrise, other natives appear on the opposite end of the plain and walk openly in line, toward the browsing animals.

These immediately make for the bush, but as they break toward the sides, the hitherto motionless figures suddenly become violently agitated as the cords are jerked; and among them at intervals the yelling native operators spring erect. Naturally, the animals head for the only apparent avenue of escape—the silent bush where the hunters and the staked pit are hidden. As they leap the bush fence and impale themselves

on the stakes, they are surrounded by hundreds of armed and yelling natives.

Few escape, and those which are lucky enough to do so are so terrified by the experience that they desert the district. These drives are of daily occurrence throughout the winter months, for the natives have no other occupation and desire none! Hence what few animals survive are so "nervy" that the sight of a human being half a mile away is sufficient to send them scurrying to cover.

In the case of reedbuck, lechwe, puku, etc., the drive is made differently, but it is even more effective. Every year the Cuando, Zambesi, Lungwebungu and other rivers, flood the reed swamps on either bank for miles to a depth of three feet or more. In these swamps are islands of dry ground—some carrying bush, and others tall clumps of reeds and papyrus—and it is in these the animals rest during the day.

Silently, they are surrounded in turn by scores of canoes, each with an armed native in addition to the paddlers. Other natives then splash through the water toward the island. The startled animals break on the opposite side, only to find canoes in instant pursuit as they take to the water. They can never get far without swimming, and in the water they have no chance. Overtaken, they are speared or clubbed; then the hunters proceed to the next island, for a native is never satisfied while an animal remains alive.

Sometimes dogs or fire may be used to drive the game from cover; but whatever the means, it is seldom an animal escapes. So that these once numerous swamp dwellers are in many places practically exterminated.

In Lake Ngami there are natives owning modern rifles, "salted" horses, and telescopic sights, who ravage the country known as the Caprivi Strip—formerly German territory—every year in search of elephants. Being mounted, distance is no deterrent, and they even enter the adjoining Portuguese territory. A Cape Town dealer told me recently that these Ngami natives were among his best customers for modern German rifles, though, of course, his own dealings were with the traders there direct. Where elephants are concerned, these natives, like the Barotse, leave neither cows nor calves unmolested, so that there will probably be few indeed in a short time! One wonders how this mandated territory became incorporated in the native Protectorate.

The methods described by no means cover the whole range, for in hunting, the native manifests an ingenuity he seldom brings to "a job of work." He finds his greatest stimulus in his stomach, and it is because—owing to his independent status—the white man can not apply that stimulus, that he fails to bring him under economic pressure.

But enough has been said to show that whatever

measures are taken for game preservation, they can never be effective unless they include the native. The white man's advent has caused the game to diminish in numbers, but his hunting prowess has little to do with it.

The wild creatures have retreated before advancing settlement into a few circumscribed areas, while the native's choice of domicile has been similarly restricted. Civilization has concentrated game strength and native strength in the same limited spaces, and closed the exits. Thus the native's destructive power and the animal's danger are both far greater than when each had the whole vast continent to roam in. It is chiefly in that manner that the white man's coming has been responsible for game diminution. Veto of the native's right to kill would be much more effective than reserves!

PART FOUR

RAMBLING REMINISCENCES

CHAPTER I

TRACKLESS TRAVELS

Queer Tribes of the Quando

AFTER so many years in the "raw lands" of Africa, the frequently published adventures of female and new-chum travelers among "cannibals," in "hitherto untrodden parts of Africa" leave me cold, and a little contemptuous. I always wonder how they manage to find these undiscovered marvels so rapidly. For once off the beaten track, even natives can give little information about places outside a fifty-mile radius, and the difficulties of transport become almost insuperable, even to old hands.

Very rarely, one wanders into a locality apparently unknown to Europeans; yet it usually transpires that some unknown wanderer has traveled the route many years earlier. Nevertheless, the journey to be described is one which natives and Portuguese

officials alike say no white man before me ever attempted. I am unlikely to repeat it, and I doubt if my description will encourage any imitators!

For the first two hundred miles of its course from the parent spring in Portuguese Angola, the Cuando has no other name. Then, for three hundred miles it becomes the Maashi; to be renamed the Chobe where it enters the Caprivi Strip and Bechuanaland; and eventually to enter the Zambesi as the Linyanti.

After it becomes the Maashi, it runs through swamps from ten to twenty miles wide—a desolate sea of reeds—and here the Baamaashi natives live as men lived in the red dawn of time, although a hundred miles to the south and east is Barotseland, and a chain of British magistracies. It is from these natives the river takes its name.

In 1923 I had lived on the lower Cuando where it enters the Caprivi Strip, and where the natives are of the Mampekush tribe—bush dwellers and cattle owners. A white man who had lived there for eight years, and had mapped the whole area between the Cuando and Okavango—one hundred seventy miles to the west—told me that the Baamaashi were a murderous set of ruffians, and that no white man had traveled through their country, both on that account, and on account of the difficulties of transport.

Yet in September, 1924, when I arrived within two hundred miles of the British border after an ex-

pensive and arduous journey through Angola, I decided to return to Livingstone by that route, in the hope of collecting some hippo hide and otter skins. It was very nearly my last trek!

With the intention of trekking through the forest bordering the western edge of the swamp, I secured carriers at a Portuguese post, to take me to a post two hundred miles away on the Cuando, called Kúbia. The *Chef-do-Posto* thoughtfully put a native soldier in charge of the carriers to prevent desertion, and I did not anticipate any trouble. But when we arrived at a small store four miles from where we had to cross the Cuando, we were told that the Kúbia post had been done away with, and the carriers at once lined up and demanded to return. Fortunately, there was a post called Dima about twelve miles down the Cuando on the other side, and the Portuguese storekeeper induced the natives to go on to that place.

Two days were occupied in getting canoes and crossing the five miles of swamp to the other side, and at midnight, on the night we crossed, the native soldier awoke me with the news that seven carriers had deserted! Next morning I sent to a near-by kraal for carriers to replace them for the twelve-mile journey to Dima, where I hoped the *Chef-do-Posto* would end my increasing difficulties by supplying fresh carriers.

As usual, none would volunteer; so having packed

my loads, I walked into the village and rounded up those I needed willy-nilly and shepherded them myself to Dima. We arrived the same afternoon, most of the route being through thick bush, except the last few miles, which were through a swamp knee-deep in mud and water.

The post stood on a high promontory on the banks of the Kuwayo River, which we crossed in canoes, but neither post nor river are marked on any map that I have seen. Instead of ending, my difficulties only commenced here. Nor did they end for another twenty-seven days. Indeed, had I known what lay ahead, I should have turned back there!

The *Chef-do-Posto* was away collecting hut tax, and was unlikely to return for several weeks. When the carriers heard this, they again lined up and demanded the "*guia*" (route permit) to return, insisting that this was the post to which they had been sent. I pointed out that Kubia was the post named on the *guia*, and that this was three or four days farther on. But as this produced no effect, I refused the *guia*, without which they could not claim payment on their return.

A solitary native soldier in charge of the post told me that a white man was engaged in road construction a few days' journey to the west, and I decided to write to him on the off-chance that he might understand English. My mutinous carriers, however, re-

fused to take the letter or to transport my goods there, and after continually pestering me for another day for the *guida*, they all cleared out, leaving me alone in this practically deserted camp, and cut off from communication with any one!

By the bribe of ten shillings I at last induced the native soldier to take a letter to the road official. This left me alone, except for a raw native and two women and children, who were apparently servants of the absent official.

My white status, and the necessity of guarding my goods, made it impossible for me to fetch wood and water for cooking purposes: so I arranged with the male native to bring these necessities during my detention. The work involved was half an hour's attendance night and morning, and for this I promised him two yards of print—equivalent to half a month's pay at local rates—but with eyes glistening with cunning and cupidity, he demanded it in advance. As force seemed inadvisable under the circumstances, I gave it to him.

Next morning there was no water, and the native had disappeared. Both women and children refused my offer of salt to bring water, and demanded print. Then I realized that having behaved like a fool in treating "black brother" like the human being he is supposed to be—instead of like the animal he really is—I must expect to be treated like a *fool*! From

time to time during that waterless and foodless day, the women and children peered at me round the corners of buildings, and sounds of subdued laughter were frequent. I grimly reflected that they were enjoying the rare luxury of dominance over the hated white man, and bided my time.

Toward evening the male native returned, and joined in the hilarity of the women, one of whom was wearing the print I had given him. I strolled casually over to the group and suddenly snatched the print off the woman's body, at the same time pointing to the river and shouting in the man's ear: "Fetch water, you! Quick!"

"I?" he asked in a surprised tone.

"Yes, you!" I replied at the same time delivering a blow with my fist that lifted him off his feet. Scrambling up, he raced for the bucket, and in half an hour there was abundance of wood and water at my tent. At dawn next morning he brought further supplies, and throughout the remaining five days of my stay, he—and the women and children—replenished supplies, washed pots and pans, and assisted in any way required, without asking for payment!

That is a practical illustration of how black mentality in the raw reacts to the impulses of greed and fear. Kindness is regarded as weakness, and the native's instinct is to turn weakness in any living thing to his own advantage!

On the following day the soldier returned with a reply written in broken English, which I was able to translate and thankful to receive, since the terrible isolation was beginning to tell severely upon me. The writer said he belonged to a post called Ueffo, about seven days' journey down the Quando by road, where the commandant of the district was stationed. This post had been opened in place of Kobia a year earlier. He said he could get carriers to take me to Ueffo, but could not secure them under seven days.

He concluded by making me free of the camp, and sending me four fowls, stating that he was living on a permanent diet of fowls and rice, and had nothing else to offer! He inquired plaintively whether a study of English would qualify him for a billet in British territory, as the pay he received was inadequate. He was—he said—only nineteen years of age.

Another week of solitude appeared interminable, and to avoid this I adopted a course which proved a serious and nearly fatal mistake. The day the letter arrived, a head-man from a neighboring village came to see me and to trade skins. On my inquiring whether he had any boats, he said he had plenty; and I decided to try to arrange a passage by water.

Reference to the map seemed to show that the Barotseland border could not be more than two hundred miles down-river, and fifty miles a day seemed

easily possible down-stream. It seemed probable, too, that I should see more Baamaashi natives, and secure more skins than on the land route which is sometimes ten or fifteen miles from the river. I knew that the natives dreaded the river on account of the danger from hippopotami, which, owing to the narrow stream and absence of solid banks, was very considerable, to say nothing of the numerous crocodiles! These objections were duly made, and finally overcome, as I fondly imagined.

I arranged for four large canoes to take me to the first village in British territory, on payment of two pounds in English money. The head-man agreed with my estimate that this village was about five days away; but he proved a scoundrel, and twenty days later, it was still sixty miles ahead! He demanded payment in advance, but I finally compromised for half the amount down, and the balance on completion of the journey.

We left the post on September the eleventh—after eight days of such loneliness and mental strain as I had seldom known—and camped at a village in the swamps about five miles away. As this was typical of most, it may be briefly described. We had followed the river for only about a mile, and then proceeded along narrow, tortuous channels, in the reed swamps, where nothing could be seen of the surrounding country, and owing to the constant twists

and turns, no sense of direction could be kept. Thus we came upon the village at sunset without warning.

It consisted of a dozen dwellings formed of mats hung upon poles, and standing on a dry patch of land about two or three feet above the swamp, and at most, fifty yards in circumference. Landing was effected by wading about ten yards through evil-smelling mud and water, and of course, winged insects and mosquitoes abounded. The natives had neither blankets nor clothing, except a small piece of hide across the loins, and they invariably ran to their canoes and disappeared, unless hailed and reassured by the natives with me.

All day they were absent in canoes, searching the swamps for edible roots, collecting fish from their reed-built traps, and firewood from the forest which loomed five to ten miles away across the vast sea of reeds. No cultivation was possible, and only a few fowls were kept in most cases, though some of the larger villages possessed a few goats. My ability to express myself was limited to a few words, and it was very obvious that for the first time in my life I was utterly at the mercy of black brother in his raw state!

The country and the language were alike strange to me; no white man save the road official knew the route I had taken, and it was quite impossible for me to move—even without my goods—except by water, now that we were fairly in the swamps. Never-

theless, I hoped that the desire to obtain the other pound would induce my paddlers to fulfil their contract, and that a few days would bring me into contact with the Mampakush or Barotse tribes, with either of whom I could make myself understood.

The following day was spent in a slow progress through the swamps, and no wood being available at midday, cold food and water formed my meal. In the afternoon we entered the river again, and travel became faster; but it was soon apparent that the river ran to every point of the compass, sometimes going due north—my true course being south—so that little real progress was made. That night, my natives told me that we should reach Massinda's—the Baumaashi female chief—the following day. However, since we could not have covered more than thirty miles in all—and probably only fifteen in the right direction, while Massinda's was on the British border—I could not believe this.

At two o'clock the next afternoon we reached a larger kraal than we had yet encountered, which they insisted was Massinda's, and stated that no other camping-places existed for many miles ahead. Knowing that Massinda was a woman, and would probably have a much larger kraal, my suspicions that they were trying to hoodwink me deepened. Confirmation came when they introduced a young native, better dressed than usual, as Massinda!

When I intimated that I knew who Masinda was, they said that this was her son—a statement I afterward found correct—and that we should arrive at her village the following day. This last was an absolute lie.

Marooned in the Swamps

I pretended to accept the explanation, but retired that night with a very uneasy mind. Perhaps this was why I awoke at midnight and got up to look for my natives, only to find—as I had half expected—that both they and the boats had vanished. It was bright moonlight, and thinking they might have gone to a near-by kraal until daylight, I awoke the head-man and demanded a boat to go in pursuit. He called something to his natives, but as these emerged from their huts, they silently vanished into the reeds where their canoes were hidden, and disappeared, until only the head-man and I were left. He then said he would go and get three very large canoes and be back with them at sunrise. Having no option, I was obliged to rely on his promise!

At daybreak I was alone, marooned upon an uninhabited island, with no fuel supplies except what remained in the huts, unable to go in search of assistance, or to communicate with any one. There was nothing to induce the natives to return, except a few easily replaceable reed mats. They might leave me

to die of starvation, to go mad in the silence and solitude; or they might surround the island at night while I slept, spear me and throw my body into the lagoon, and then loot my goods. No one knew where I was, and white men were seldom able to approach these natives, even if inquiries were made!

All these reflections came to me as I sat and surveyed that dreary swamp with the outline of trees that indicated firm ground only a faint blur in the distance. To be left alone in the bush was nothing new in my experience. With my feet on solid ground and a rifle in my hand, I feared neither man nor beast; but here my utter helplessness and enforced inactivity smote me with crushing force.

Then came reaction. Was I to yield myself helplessly to these animals in human shape? Was I to be outmaneuvered by these Baamaashi rats, like any newly arrived missionary or new-olium explorer?—I who had hammered the insolence from fighting Zulus and Matabele in empty forest spaces, and forced them to address me as “Chief”?

Swiftly came the answers to these questions. Yes, if I relied upon civilized methods in a savage environment! No, if I met savage conditions with savage methods! Long-dead ancestors whispered that they had endowed me with three weapons for use in just these circumstances, and that I had only to use them to win. These weapons were imagination to foresee,

intellect to plan, and courage to execute. I cast the cloak of civilization from me like the useless encumbrance it was, and stood forth savage as black brother; exulting in the battle of wits and courage to come. And the final victory I knew with certainty would be mine.

In the early morning, shadowy figures had passed silently through the reeds at a distance, but had ignored my shouts. I now waded into the swamp, rifle in hand, to the edge of the intersecting lagoon, and—while hidden in the reeds—kept careful watch. Standing knee-deep in mud and water, tense, savage and vigilant, I saw God smile. The God of great winds and mighty spaces, of the cyclone and the lightning flash, of all things strong and vast. Not He who is concerned with a sparrow's fall, but He to whom the annihilation of a universe is but an item in the curriculum of man's education. Conviction came to me, as I stood there in ambush, that I was vindicating the attributes He had endowed me with—as an hour earlier I had stultified them—and that to me it was given to illustrate to these primitive savages, the law that a higher intelligence must prevail. That to balk that law entails swift and certain punishment. A fundamental principle of all progress!

About midday a native in a canoe emerged cautiously upon the lagoon. Carefully aligning my sights, I called to him, and like his predecessors he at

once made for the reeds. Pressing the trigger, I sent a bullet through the canoe close to his legs; slammed the bolt home; sighted to kill if necessary, and called again. After going on his knees and howling for mercy, he gathered my meaning, and paddled rapidly toward me. Plugging the hole in the canoe, I stepped in and ordered him to take me to the head-man, and he at once set off through the swamps.

After an hour's rapid paddle we came to a large village, where we found the head-man. Without listening to his voluble excuses, I ordered him to bring three large canoes and six paddlers, and to accompany me at once, enforcing the order with significant motions of my rifle. After a short delay the boats were secured, and we returned to the deserted village. By four o'clock my goods were loaded and I insisted on leaving at once; in spite of voluble protestations. By sunset we reached a village about seven miles away, though perhaps three as the crow flies, and camped for the night.

I had intended to stay awake to prevent desertion, but having had little sleep the preceding night, fatigue overcame me. Waking at four in the morning, I found the boats and crews had again vanished; but the village still slept. Taking my rifle, I mounted guard at the water's edge until daylight, and then rudely awakened the occupants of one of the huts.

Covering them, I marched them down to one of their own boats and ordered them to take me back to the head-man I had left the day before.

On arrival, I forced him to accompany me to the village where we had obtained the boats. Here we found the boats, but only three of the paddlers, the others having gone to their own village—some distance away. Resolving this time to give them a sharp lesson, I set fire to the village and fishing nets, smashed all the boats but those I needed with a sledge-hammer belonging to my tent, and then proceeded to the village of the other deserters and treated it in similar fashion. Informing the captive head-man that he would be held as hostage, until he either landed me at the Portuguese post or replaced the boats and crews I had commandeered, with others, we returned to where my goods had been left.

We again got away about four o'clock, and covered much the same distance as on the preceding day, when we again came to a village. These villages are so well hidden in the reeds that a traveler might journey for days without seeing one; but they are seldom far apart, and natives living in the vicinity know all those within a two-day radius of their own. Beyond that distance they seldom travel by water.

That night I had all the boats hauled up abreast, high and dry out of the water, put my goods into two of them, and slept in the center one myself. This

meant proximity to the muddy breeding grounds of the mosquito, but it also made the removal of the boats without my knowledge impossible. The faces of the natives, when they saw this maneuver, satisfied me that I had given them a difficult and unexpected problem to solve!

Awakening for the first time with the pleasant knowledge that my means of transport was safe, I determined to put in a long day and make progress. For I doubted whether I had made forty miles, in spite of twenty-three hours' actual paddle from Dima, and an estimated water mileage of sixty miles!

By nightfall we had paddled some thirty miles, but the river turned continually north and west for stretches of a mile at a time, while Massinda's and the British border lay south and east. I discovered later, that for this reason—and the danger from hippo—natives never use the river, but travel overland, except at seasons of flood, when they can keep a fairly straight course over the swamps.

The head-man I had retained as hostage now said he wished to return, as beyond the kraal we had reached, he did not know the river. I told him that provided he secured me boats and paddlers in place of those we had, he might do so, but not otherwise. From information in the road official's letter it appeared that the post—Ueffo—was a few miles below Massinda's, and having been hoodwinked once as to the kraal, I decided to make for the post.

As on the previous night, I hauled the boats out of the water and slept in one of them, with my mosquito net suspended from four paddles. I had no fear of attack during the night, since I had a small terrier and a larger dog with me—unless of course they attacked in force from the cover of the reeds. In reply to queries, the natives said that Ueffo Post was only one day's walk away, and I began to think my troubles were nearing their end. As a matter of fact they had only begun, and fourteen days were still to elapse before the post was reached!

By seven o'clock next morning three new boats and six paddlers arrived, but one boat proving too small, I retained one of those I had, telling the headman he could send for it later. I then paid off the natives, although they had only accompanied me under duress.

My new crews loafed continually, and because of this, and the tortuous course of the river, it was doubtful if we had made ten true miles when we camped at sunset at the largest kraal I had yet seen. On this island—about two miles from the river—some cultivated land was in evidence, and having been reduced to a diet of rice for a number of days, I was glad to purchase some fowls and sweet potatoes.

During the day we had nearly run into a large hippo asleep in the reeds, and as he took water, both dogs leaped after him and prevented a shot. In view

of the crocodiles, their recovery was fortunate, and I thrashed both soundly to check their future ardor.

Inquiries as to the post elicited the usual reply that it was still "two days away." My paddlers intimated that they would get others to take me on, the following day, as they did not know the river lower down. About four o'clock the next afternoon they wished to turn off the river for this purpose, but as this seemed to involve going due north again through the swamp, I insisted on going forward.

That night at sundown we reached a small village near the main stream, and camped. But there were obviously no boats available, and the few natives had only been prevented from clearing out as we approached by the encouraging shouts of my paddlers. It seemed the common practise with all these people to vanish at once at sight of a white man!

Hunting "Black Brother"

It was obvious to me that my paddlers had weighty matters to discuss, by their earnest conversation with the villagers after dark; but as I occupied the boats I felt sure I had them in "a cleft stick." The possibility of their sacrificing the boats did not occur to me. Nevertheless, awakening at four in the morning, an ominous silence indicated that the unexpected had happened.

Investigation showed that the only living inhabi-

tants of the island were myself and the dogs, a few fowls and two goats. Every native had silently disappeared, and for the third time I was marooned!

Standing there with a bitter rage in my heart, I became aware of two shadowy black figures creeping toward the huts, and as they moved forward I stealthily endeavored to cut off their retreat. But they saw me, and raced for the river bank, and although I hastened their departure with two pistol-shots, the light was too dim to bring either of them down. When dawn came, I burned all the huts, destroyed the pots and food, smashed a couple of the boats, and before I left—three days later—I shot the fowls and goats, leaving the place bare.

This destruction gave me some satisfaction, and I reflected that should any white man be similarly situated here in future, the recollection might deter these natives from treating him as they had treated *me*.

Then I sat down to review my position. We had landed through a channel in the reeds about half a mile long, but an inspection showed that the solid ground extended to the bank of the river—an unusual circumstance—so I decided to get my goods to the bank, endeavor to launch one canoe, and paddle it round to the open river, load up what goods it would take, and proceed alone until I could get natives again, leaving most of my goods behind.

The plan was full of risk, as the current was strong, and the loaded canoe awkward for one man to handle—even if an expert paddler—while a collision with a hippo, or an accidental capsize, would mean my final and mysterious exit. But there was no alternative, and throughout that long hot day, I transferred my goods over the two hundred yards to the river bank, carrying my rifle all the time to prevent attempts to remove the boats—which remained within view—during my absences. This labor was necessitated by the shallow water of the reed channel in which I could not maneuver the loaded boat unaided, though I might do so on the main stream when assisted by the current.

During the morning fever and dysentery attacked me, the latter no doubt due to the stinking swamp water. Hence progress was slow, and it was long past noon before all my goods were removed. The problem of launching the heaviest canoe was solved by using charred poles from the huts as rollers, and the other two boats I smashed to matchwood.

It was near sunset by the time I had maneuvered the boat out to the river and made fast to the bank where my goods were. Utterly exhausted, I spread my blankets on the ground and fell asleep. Next day I was too weak and ill to eat, but managed to erect a tent-fly and my camp stretcher, and decided to rest and recover my strength.

My mental state may be imagined from the fact that I seriously considered taking my rifle and hunting these Baamaashi natives with the boat, while my ammunition lasted. I had three hundred rounds, and could rely on accounting for two hundred fifty of them before coming to the round reserved for myself. I knew that such a lesson would be handed down among the survivors, and it seemed probable that they would never again treat white men as they had treated *m.c.* The thought of my wife in Livingstone alone decided me to continue the struggle, and many a Baamaashi native owes his continued existence to her unconscious intervention!

Feeling somewhat better next day, I loaded the boat, left my other stuff under a bucksail and started down-river, keeping as close to the reeds as possible. After a mile or so I found a channel in the reeds which showed traces of use by canoes. Following this for about two miles, I came suddenly upon a collection of about twenty huts and a dozen male natives. I promptly covered them with my rifle and stepped ashore, giving them to understand that I wanted six paddlers and two large boats to take me to Ueffo Post, and that unless these were promptly forthcoming I should shoot some of them at once.

Their looks of consternation and muttered remarks, indicated that they had heard news of my plight, though they had just as obviously not antici-

pated my present move. Within a few minutes six of the biggest agreed to accompany me; two of the largest canoes were produced, and we returned and loaded the balance of my goods. These natives informed me that Ueffo was three days away, but it actually proved to be five.

That night I camped on a wooded island near the main stream, and as this was uninhabited there were no boats but those I slept in, and desertion was impossible.

Next morning we had proceeded only half a mile down-stream when we met a school of four hippo, which promptly headed toward the canoes. In an instant my big dog sprang into the water and swam toward them. A clash of great tusks, an agonized yelp, and a black and bleeding mass dropped from the cavernous jaws and sank into the river. The dog paid the penalty of disobedience, but the terrier listened to my voice and refused to follow his reckless comrade. Sighting carefully, while the natives held to the reeds and kept the canoe steady, I placed a bullet under the eye of the nearest hippo, and he sank like a stone, while the others disappeared.

Deciding to wait and secure the dead hippo, in the hope that meat would reconcile my unwilling paddlers to continue a journey they evidently feared, we proceeded cautiously for two miles, when we came to a convenient lagoon with sloping banks and a few



RESTING RHINOCEROSES

Wm. G. G. G.

trees. Here we off-loaded the camp equipment and set a watch on the main stream to await the arrival of the carcass.

In two hours the great mass—pink belly and short legs uppermost—came floating down, and attaching a riem to a leg, we towed it into the lagoon. Then we sent for assistance, and within half an hour over fifty natives appeared out of this apparently uninhabited swamp!

The remainder of that day and the next was spent in cleaning the hide, rendering down fat, and cutting up and salting the meat. I secured about sixty pounds of excellent fat from this hippo, and salted about twenty pounds of the belly into very fair bacon. I told the natives who had assisted that I wanted two more boats and four paddlers to convey the hide to Ueffo (which they said was now a day and a half away), and that they could divide the salt meat among them, leaving it with their friends until their return. The boats and paddlers duly arrived next morning, bringing my flotilla up to five.

By this time I was closely observant and suspicious of any unusual circumstance, and their whispered conversations, combined with an omission to take meat for more than one day's supply, made me anticipate attempts at desertion. During the day they paddled very slowly, and gave the impression that they were trying to "kill time." They passed fre-

quent whispered remarks to one another, and about three o'clock they wished to turn off the river to where they said there was a large kraal, but this I would not allow. A couple of hours later, the river passed round a high bluff—thickly timbered and surrounded by water—the highest land I had yet met with.

As the swamps extended round the back of this for at least seven miles, to the edge of the forest, I resolved to camp here. It was impossible to haul the boats out of the water, so I decided to leave the goods in them, and to keep guard all night, a plan which seemed to make desertion impossible. Off-loading only the camp equipment and hippo strips, and taking all the paddles up the steep bank—a distance of fifty yards—I camped among the trees and hung the strips up to dry.

The natives earnestly desired to take off all the goods and carry them up the hill, lest—as they said—they might sustain damage from the leaky boats. This was highly suspicious, for a native never under any circumstances volunteers for extra work to save a white man's goods from damage!

When darkness fell, I ordered the natives to bivouac ten yards from my deck-chair, in which I intended to pass the night. I noted the further significant fact that they had collected no wood for fires, but only twigs and brushwood sufficient to last a few

hours. When it became apparent that I was not going to bed, much earnest discussion ensued, and perplexity was evident in the furtive glances cast in my direction.

About ten o'clock they lay down and made a pretense of sleeping, but at intervals I caught the gleam of white in half-open eyes turned in my direction. Yet I failed to see how they could leave without boats, even if they were prepared to sacrifice the latter to escape the short journey to Ueffo.

Near to midnight a soft "lapping" of water near the boats came to my ears, and knowing that the backwater was stagnant, and that something must be going on to account for this, I counted the forms by the fire. Two were missing, having crawled away in the bush unobserved! Seizing my rifle I raced down the bank, and as I neared the bottom, two forms raced away into the bush. At the same moment a shout and scurry of feet from above apprized me that my ill-advised action had allowed the others to escape!

The two boats I had left loaded were already half empty, the goods being on the bank. It was evident that a plan to escape with the boats had been frustrated only by my vigilance. None was missing, and from then until dawn I sat on guard over them at the water's edge, grimly determined not to lose my only means of escape from this lonely headland. Toward dawn, a series of "plops" higher up in the backwater

told me that my treacherous crews had risked the crocodiles and swum across the lagoon, evidently making for some kraal they knew of!

At daybreak, after feeding the terrier and making a cup of coffee, I smashed four of the boats,—retaining only the largest,—and stacking my goods as before, I loaded this and forced a slow progress up-stream to where I had observed a backwater the day before, about half a mile higher up. Entering this, I progressed cautiously for some two miles, and then saw a small kraal a mile away on an open flat.

Fastening the terrier in the boat, I crawled across the boggy flat on my stomach for six hundred yards, without being seen, then stood up and approached on the run. At once black figures began to scurry away, but it was too late. My rifle came to my shoulder and a bullet struck the ground at the feet of the foremost. As he halted in indecision, my command to halt was accompanied by the significant rattle of the rifle bolt as I reloaded.

The command was obeyed, but on coming up to them I found only one male native. My demand for boats and natives elicited the reply that none was available for many miles, so I ordered my solitary captive down to the boat. Arrived there, he asked where we were going. I told him: "Down the river to find boats and paddlers!" Finding protest unavailing, he entered the boat and took the steering

paddle at the stern, while I took the other at the bow, and started back the way I had come.

Hippo Haunts and Ueffo at Last

We proceeded past the promontory where my goods were stacked, for perhaps two miles, when on rounding a bend of the river I saw, twenty yards ahead, what—in the shock of surprise—I took to be a row of huge boulders stretched across the river, at this part only twenty yards wide. Then I remembered that there were no rapids on the Quando, and in the same instant I recognized the obstacles as a row of hippo heads!

Fortunately we were hugging the reeds, and I quickly grasped them, yelling to my terrified native to do likewise. As he obeyed, and held the boat stationary, I seized my rifle. Instead of submerging, as on rivers where rifles are in general use, these hippo were swimming straight for the boat, and at fifteen yards seemed to wear a look of surprise rather than menace on their ugly faces.

Aiming at the eye of the nearest, I fired with un-hurried care, and as the bullet struck, every head—there were twelve of them—disappeared. A moment later the great bulk of the wounded hippo broke water five yards away, heading for our side of the river, and spouting blood and water like a wounded whale. As he neared the reeds and the water grew shallow,

his body rose clear, and I placed a second bullet behind the shoulder. Staggering a few yards, he fell among the reeds and lay partially submerged in five feet of water, where he expired.

As the others had vanished, I wished to proceed, but the native suggested that he had better call natives with boats! I reminded him that he had said there were no natives in the vicinity, but he said that now there was meat he could return at sundown with a large number! Being fairly confident that this was true, I allowed him to take the boat and go in search of them, after helping me to pitch a tent-fly on a sand-bank not far from the dead hippo. I instructed him to pick up my goods on his return and to bring them along.

Left alone with my reflections, I realized that had I not secured this solitary paddler the meeting with the hippo would have been my end. They would have assuredly upset the boat, and escape through miles of close-growing reeds—rooted in several feet of water—would have been impossible. A single man attempting to use a rifle from a canoe, would be carried on by the current, while his aim would be destroyed by the motion of the dugout. As things were, the meeting was fortunate, since the meat would attract scores of natives, and I might be enabled to proceed with all my goods instead of hunting boats and paddlers.

At sunset, eighteen boats and about forty natives arrived! They brought my goods with them and proceeded to camp for the night on the sandbank. At daybreak they prepared to deal with the dead hippo, but this movement I stopped. I made them understand that my goods must be loaded into two of the largest boats, and that six paddlers must accompany me to Ueffo. In return, they might take the whole of the meat and fat, and bring me the strips of hide overland to Ueffo, knowing they feared the Portuguese too much to abscond with anything they had been made responsible for. I did not want the strips, as I knew they would have rotted, but I wished to make sure of the paddlers, who were their "brothers"!

My terms were complied with, and we left about eight o'clock. By four in the afternoon we had covered some twenty-five miles, although we were held up twice by schools of hippo. Soon after leaving, we passed ten more dugouts flocking like vultures to the feast. Indeed, it is doubtful if the vulture is quicker than black brother in locating meat!

Two hours before sunset three hippo suddenly broke water about twenty yards from my canoe, which was leading. One cow must have had a calf in the vicinity, for after a moment's surprised hesitation she opened her cavernous mouth, and with the curious equine snort peculiar to the female, she came straight for the boat.

My stern paddler dived into the reeds and clung there like a monkey on a stick, with his legs embracing a bundle of them. Warning the bow native to hold fast to the reeds, I sighted far back in the open mouth. Not desiring a wounded bulk of some two tons indulging in death throes under the canoe, and knowing there would be no second chance, I waited until she was within twenty-five feet and then fired.

The solid bullet must have reached the brain instantly. The great head flew up as though a steam-hammer had struck the neck; the jaws snapped to with a clash of tusks, and the huge mass disappeared. The others quietly submerged, and after waiting half an hour with rifle ready, I resumed a cautious progress down-stream.

This was the only hippo I met which displayed hostility. The others were more curious than hostile, though their curiosity was no less dangerous! An elephantine bulk attempting familiarity with a frail dugout is a thing to be avoided: to say nothing of tusks capable of penetrating steel plates!

An hour afterward we reached the most miserable camping-place I had yet seen, which is saying a great deal! Six mat houses on a piece of damp mud twenty yards square, with a swampy flat stretching for at least seven miles behind it, and on the riverside a twenty-yard cutting in the reeds: knee-deep in mud and water, by way of a landing.

The occupants tallied with their surroundings: naked except for a strip of greasy hide; with matted greasy hair; filthy bodies seamed with scars, new and old, and monkey-like faces; yet contented with their sanctuary while they could retain it inviolate from the white man and all his works. These were the type of beings wise politicians and erudite editors in far-away Europe would insist on allowing to decide their own destiny!

The kraal was very near the Barotseland border. The advantages of agriculture and commerce, of gaudy prints and manufactured blankets, of steel implements, etc., were not unknown to them. But they knew that work was necessary to acquire these; so they preferred to live as described, to avoid it! In this kraal, too, I met for the first time a native who could speak "kitchen Kafir"—the lingua Franca of Rhodesia—and asked him where he had learned it. I was surprised to learn that he had worked in Southern Rhodesia! I asked him whether he did not prefer to live as a man—like the Matabele—instead of rooting for food in the swamps like a pig? He merely laughed and said: "Work is no good! Here we do not have to work!" He assured me, however, that we should really reach Ueffo on the morrow, and agreed to accompany me to the post as interpreter.

I had hoped to secure the dead hippo as it floated down-stream; but although we kept watch until dark,

we saw nothing of it. As explained elsewhere in this book, the time a hippo takes to rise is always uncertain. On rivers like the Quando there are no rapids or shallows to hold up its progress when it floats, so that hippo was probably twenty miles away by daylight, perhaps to be stopped as treasure trove by some hawk-eyed native. Shooting on such rivers provides more thrills than fat! Lower down the Quando—where they had been often hunted—a daylight shot was rarely obtained. Their fearlessness on this upper stretch was due to my being the first white man to traverse it, and the absence of native guns. Without doubt, the fear they inspired in the natives had a great deal to do with the frequent desertions.

After four hours' paddle next day, we reached the nearest point on the river to Ueffo, the post being some five miles from the river. This was on September the twenty-eighth,—eighteen days after leaving Dima,—and the kraal in British territory I had hoped to reach (Letia-Inyane's) was still sixty road miles farther south. The actual traveling on the river was ten days, and the distance certainly not less than two hundred fifty miles. The road journey is one hundred eighty, and occupies eight days with carriers. Thus I had lost ten days in time, and endured eighteen days of such mental strain—to say nothing of physical danger and hardship—as had made a savage (and well-nigh a madman) of me!

With a white companion, my experiences would not have affected me as they did. The loneliness and silence, and the impossibility of taking action such as a man in the bush may take, added to the strain of constant vigilance, and the lack of proper food, had created a mental condition dangerous alike to myself and any who might cross my path. It should be remembered, too, that all this came at the end of a fifteen-hundred-mile trek, when I was naturally anxious to make speed back home.

It is true I had firearms, but numbers were with the Baamaashi, and a man must sleep sometimes! Also, the natives were inaccessible, and could bring evidence galore in explanation, had I disappeared, even if inquiries were made. Curiously enough, it was this possibility that worried me most, not the dying itself. I resented the thought of the how and why remaining unknown, and black brother evading punishment!

Now that the strain was over a reaction set in. Fever and dysentery seized me, and for two days I could not visit the post. On October first I walked over. Hitherto I had met only Civil Service officials, but this was a military post, and I had heard tales of the swashbuckling propensities of such officials which were not encouraging. Since I had assuredly blazed a trail through the Baamaashi country I felt uncertain of my reception, and placed a loaded automatic in my

packet with a determination to use it if detention were attempted. For after what I had been through I was resolved to complete the journey at any cost.

I need not have worried, and felt somewhat ashamed of my precaution after meeting the commandant. He was a gray-haired, courteous captain, who had spent eighteen years in Africa, and who now retained command of one of the last of the military stations. He was astonished at my appearance, and still more so when I told him the route by which I had come. He said officials never used it, for reasons which I had found obvious!

Determined to clear the air of any possible germs of dispute, I told him the methods by which my progress had been accomplished. Shrugging his shoulders, he replied:

"It is the only way possible! We can not collect tax, and even if we surround a village in the night, they always escape in the reeds. They are wild animals, and run when they see a white man. Also, they are much afraid of the hippo!"

Being now assured that my fears of unpleasantness were groundless, I accepted his invitation to lunch. In spite of his lack of English, and my own limited command of Portuguese, we contrived a considerable amount of conversation, and I passed the first pleasant day I had spent for a long time. Mentioning the otter skins and hippo hide I had with me, he showed me the

export regulations placing a duty on them, but said that he would not apply them to *me* as a "visitor"!

He also said that if I desired to return and live in the district, he would issue me a resident's trading and hunting license, at a total cost of about ten pounds per annum. The latter allowed six hippo and five rhinoceros *monthly*. I reflected that I might do worse than accept the suggestion; but Fate intervened and I have never returned there.

He sent word to neighboring kraals to bring my goods over, and promised to secure carriers to complete the journey to the Zambesi by road. Two days later I moved to the post, and the carriers arriving shortly after, I was able to leave on October the fifth. During the time I enjoyed his hospitality we amused ourselves by mutual instruction in our respective languages, and before I left I received striking proof of his consideration and courtesy.

Like most of the Portuguese, he did not breakfast before midday, but at six-thirty on the morning I left, I found he had prepared a substantial meal for me! He excused himself from joining me at so early an hour, but insisted on my eating as a preparation for the road. In addition, although native food was extremely scarce, and had to be transported for three hundred miles, he provided me with sufficient to start the trip, and as my way lay through a game country, this was all I needed. I can recollect many instances

of much less kindly treatment by officials of my own nationality!

I eventually reached Livingstone early in November, and remembering that on many a day during September I had never expected to do so, I was surprised to find myself strongly averse to recounting my experiences. It was a year before I could do so with equanimity. Travelers dealing in the marvelous may embellish those events which have passed over them lightly; but those which were tragic to the soul they will find bitter on the tongue. That at least is my experience!

CHAPTER II

SOME DENIZENS OF DESERT PLACES

SOME time ago there appeared in the South African Press an article on Namaqualand: quite recently there have been several such articles. This sudden accession of interest in those sandy, sun-baked solitudes may perhaps have been due to the discovery of diamonds at the mouth of the Orange River. At all events, it is the first manifestation of public interest I have noticed since I spent a year in those forgotten wastes in 1904-1905.

To a casual visitor, what a magistrate of Springbokfontein—the capital—called “the bleached and sun-baked kopjes of Namaqualand” will appear the predominant feature; and his writings will be replete with the harshness a granite environment has impressed on his consciousness. Yet there is a wealth of human interest, a history of adventure, romance, curious customs and happiness, to be found in this backwater of the modern world, which well repays a longer sojourn there.

A distinct race of men and women live there. A

race unaffected by modern transitions, and hiding under exteriors shaped to ruggedness by environment, a kindliness and simplicity of character, a contentment and cheeriness, all too rare in the world to-day.

I went there at the end of 1904 via Port Nolloth—traveling in the old *Nautilus*—as a member of the Cape Mounted Police. Most of my comrades were from the Eastern Province, and seemed to regard their transfer to a land where farms were more than a mile or two apart, as a hopeless exile. But I had previously sojourned in the Rhodesian bush, and although a lover of the tall timber, the solitudes seemed to me preferable to the cramped European cities from which I had recently returned.

We traveled from Port Nolloth to Okiep in a ramshackle coach attached to the Copper Company's freight train. No charge was made for passengers traveling this ninety-mile journey, as the Company was not prepared to shoulder the risk of injury from accident, and was not licensed to carry passengers. On the journey we obtained proof that a considerable risk existed. At the foot of a range of mountains the engine ascended with half the train, and returned later for the other half. I was told that the gradient was one in seven, though this seems unbelievable!

At the top of the mountain was an employee's cottage, outside which stood the only two trees I ever saw in the country! Leaving this place—Klipfon-

tein—we sat on the open trucks for greater coolness, and were amazed to find ourselves speeding down the mountainside under our own momentum, the engine going on about half a mile ahead! However, we put our faith in Providence and the trust proved justified. Hooking up later, the engine hauled us into Okiep about mid-afternoon, the last fifty miles consisting of a mountainous switchback.

Proceeding by road to Springbokfontein—five miles away—we found ourselves in the sleepy, silent, hill-encircled village which is the capital of Namaqualand. We discovered that the nearest railway station was Eendekuil—three hundred sixty miles away—and that a post left for there by mule cart weekly. I think this information convinced my Eastern province comrades that they had inadvertently stepped over the edge of the world, and were dead to life and hope!

But I soon discovered that romance and high adventure flourished amid this apparent stagnation, and that this big new world was inhabited by big new men with a new code of values.

The Commanding Officer was an ex-Imperial man, and his method of punishment for minor offenses was to give his subordinate the choice of putting on the gloves with him, or accepting the prescribed fine, confinement to barracks, or hard labor. A few who fancied their pugilistic skill chortled at the choice; but their chuckles were brief. Only twice did the

sporting C. O. get worsted in about fifty battles; while those who refused the trial from timidity might rely on a stern duty course, and the contempt of their comrades. "Behave yourself, or take a hiding," was the C. O.'s slogan, and the disciplinary effect was very salutary!

The sergeant major was a six-foot-four-inch Canadian, who had recently rounded up a notorious gang of armed native filibusters from across the German border. The magistrate was a cultured gentleman from the Eastern Province, who would place his flask and edibles at the disposal of a chance met trooper, extend the same social amenities to him as to the C. O., or clap him into gaol—if necessary—with the same cheerful impartiality and bonhomie. A big man—mentally and physically—with a heart of gold, and no mean intellect.

Among the first men I met was one of those romantic rogues a person often reads about but seldom meets. An ex-gymnastic instructor of the Scots Guards, and holder of the Ashanti medal, the Boer War had found him a corporal in the Cape Police in Namaqualand. When the local Boers went into rebellion, he saw in the circumstance a chance of pecuniary profit, as well as military glory. With the connivance of a sergeant, he raided numerous horses and mules belonging to the Government and to private persons, clipped, docked, branded and other-

wise altered their appearance, and resold them, sometimes to the original owners! Before he was "caught out," he and the sergeant had amassed about nine hundred pounds!

Being arrested, Mac—which was only half his name—said to the sergeant: "You hang on to the funds until I come out. I'll do the time, and say nothing!" He was fined twelve months, and being a useful penman, did most of it as magistrate's clerk, with special dietary privileges. But alas for the reputed "honor among thieves." The sergeant quietly arranged a transfer, and afterward took his discharge, departing with the booty, for which Mac underwent "durance vile," to parts unknown!

On completion of his sentence Mac made a tour of the country in search of means of support. Coming to a farm owned by a Dutch widow with two daughters, and managed by a lover of the lady's, he found temporary employment. Within a week his well-knit figure and daredevil deportment found favor in the lady's sight, and she whispered a desire to be rid of her one-time manager.

This Mac gratified by first issuing simple marching orders, and on being met with refusal, by "knocking out" the discarded lover and subsequently escorting him over the farm boundary with stern instructions to stay there! Later, he consolidated his position by obtaining a written magisterial order to

patrolling policemen to arrest—at the lady's request—her ex-lover if found trespassing upon her property! Such simple, forceful methods seemed to fit the primitive environment like the proverbial glove, and showed that both humor and romance might survive, though life was hardly maintained!

This history came to me later. At my first meeting with Mac I had the misfortune to disagree with him, and accepted his suggestion that we should adjourn to camp and borrow the C. O.'s gloves. The subsequent proceedings were very swift, and when I woke up some time later, I wondered whether I had met a professional pugilist disguised as a farmer! On my request for a further trial, he gave me a private display of muscle control, and showed me several boxing medals, which induced me to accept his proffered hand, and we remained very good friends thenceforward!

In Springbok too, we heard details of the patrols which would be expected of us. The one which caused greatest apprehension to recruits was the monthly "pay patrol" to Pella, on the Orange River. Leaving Springbok in the morning, the policeman traveled to a small dorp thirty miles away—of which I can not now recall the name—and rested there until late the following afternoon. Then he set out on a seventy-mile ride across Little Bushmanland to Aggeneys, the next water. From this latter point it

was only twenty miles to Pella, but the seventy-mile night ride was across dreary sand dunes, on a road consisting of a wagon track in the shifting sand, and a man untrained to the veld might easily miss it, with disastrous results.

Some time before our arrival, a sergeant had elected to fill his bottle with brandy at the dorp mentioned, had missed his way, gone mad, and cut his horse's throat to drink the blood. When found two days later by a casual transport rider, he was stark naked and at the point of death, while the pay he carried was scattered with his equipment over the veld! He was taken to an asylum for the insane, and since then, two men had always been sent together on that patrol. But it remained one which called for vigilance and great physical endurance from man and beast. It may be added that at Pella the Roman Catholic Mission Fathers had built a wonderful little church, which, including the mosaic work and decorations, had occupied them for seven years!

Another station involving arduous patrols at that time, was Raman's Drift on the Orange River, where the C. M. P. camp faced that of the Germans across the river. Our men constantly patrolled the border to intercept either Germans or Hottentots who might cross, sometimes one party being driven over, and sometimes the other. Germans who crossed were temporarily disarmed, and escorted to Port Nolloth,

where they were returned via the coast to their own forces. This station was said to be less thirsty than others, however, as the Germans had large supplies of beer at their base camp, and were most hospitable to our men on their frequent visits!

Here then, in this forbidding, desolate land we had reached, was romance, tragedy, adventure, opportunity and much "elbow room," besides good-fellowship! So I by no means shared my comrades' regret at our transfer, and awaited the allocation of my station with interest. This proved to be Garies, a small village on the postal route about ninety miles from Springbok, and about the same distance from Hondeklip Bay, on the coast. The route lay through the foot-hills of the Kamiesberg range, where the more prosperous farmers had homesteads, and through rugged and mountainous, but impressive, scenery. En route, we slept at the only village, Bowesdorp, about forty-five miles from Springbok, and next afternoon arrived at our new station.

The village lay in a sweltering hollow in the shadow of the mountains,—which here turned north-east toward Bushmanland,—while the road beyond stretched endlessly south across huge sandy plains covered with stunted bush. From midday until four p. m. little sign of life might be observed, and the fierce sun beat down upon white-walled buildings which might have been tombs.

On our arrival there was little to indicate the cheery disposition of the inhabitants to enjoy life to the full, or to encourage a belief that I was to spend here what I should afterward regard as the happiest year of my life. Some dozen dwelling houses, half a dozen general stores, a post-office, church and police camp, comprised the tout ensemble.

We soon found that in the absence of social barriers and in general bonhomie, Claries was no whit behind Springbok. As most of the residents were Dutch or semi-Dutch, and had been tacitly or actively in sympathy with the Boer forces, I expected some passive hostility at least, toward so obvious an Englishman as myself, and a "khaki" to boot! I was agreeably surprised to find myself within a month, to all intents and purposes a member of a somewhat large family, a jolly family, much more given to enjoyment of the present than regrets or resentment for the past. In the country districts it was the same, and but for that fact we policemen would have had a very rough time indeed.

Our patrols were all solitary ones, and sometimes extended to five days' or a week's travel. But for the hospitality we everywhere received, these would have been impossible without a pack-horse to carry supplies. As it was, we often rode with a stripped saddle! Nearly every patrol took us into the Kamiesberg, Bushmanland, or to the coast. The former

meant a climb of five thousand feet, and was a welcome relief from the stifling heat of Garies.

Here I met the most intellectual—as he was certainly the most outspoken—missionary. I have come across. Sitting with him in his study one evening, the talk turned on native education, and I asked him: “Do you think it is good for these natives to teach them as you are doing?”

“My dear fellow,” he replied, “I do not concern myself with that aspect at all. There are certain people in my country—Australia—who believe it to be good. I have the necessary training to impart the instruction, and those people are willing to pay me for doing so. That is all there is to it! If they cease to pay my salary, I shall certainly cease to teach, whether it is good or bad!” And I knew that I was talking to an honest man!

The farmers lived on an average about fifteen to eighteen miles apart, and all were engaged in breeding sheep and goats. Pasture, soil and water were not sufficient for large-scale agriculture or cattle raising, and I do not remember ever seeing any cattle in the country. Even small-stock farmers were faced with grave problems. While the animals could thrive on the bush of the mountainsides, water had nearly always to be procured from pits sunk in the sandy beds of ravines, and supplied by windlass, bucket and trough, to the stock.

The farmers, almost without exception, obtained twelve months' credit at the local stores, and about September or October the "speculators" (dealers) would arrive from Cape Town by road, and buy up the stock available for sale. Only at such periods was any cash in circulation, and most of it was paid immediately to the stores, in liquidation of accounts.

When the rains set in, most farmers trekked into Bushmanland with their stock, and remained there until the water and pasture dried up and compelled their return. At these times, the patrolling policeman would arrive at an empty house, and be obliged to follow the spoor for twenty to fifty miles, to where—in a hut made of reed mats laid over saplings sharpened at either end and forced into the ground—the farmer and his family would be camped until the need for pasture compelled another move.

After a time, these little "humpies"—resembling an Eskimo igloo in shape—became a cheering sight to me at sundown, after traveling for many miles on an uncertain trail over desolate wastes. More than once I missed a trail, or arrived at a deserted encampment, and on these occasions I passed the night on the sand in my blanket, without food, and sometimes without water! Once, all unknowingly, I camped on a mountain trail at dark, within a mile of a farmhouse so well hidden in the frowning kloofs that no light was visible, and no sound of life came to me!

The first time I arrived at a mat house I felt somewhat embarrassed, as besides the farmer and his wife, there were two sons and three well-grown daughters. I suggested sleeping by the fire, but this the old man would not hear of. I was curious to see how he would solve the problem, but he managed it with a delicate diplomacy, and a subtle strategy that excited my admiration.

After dinner he sat with me by the fire smoking, while the family retired in order of sex. Then at a signal from within, he invited me to enter, and pointed to a vacant bed on the floor, adjacent to those already occupied by his sons and daughters. His wife was in bed on the large "cartel" and he at once blew out the light and proceeded to undress and join her.

At daybreak I awoke, and through half-closed eyes saw the good lady make a careful reconnaissance over her husband's recumbent figure, before slipping out of bed on the farther side. I feigned slumber, while the old man lighted his pipe and watched me keenly, and after dressing, his wife awoke her daughters softly. In a few minutes they were dressed and had joined their mother outside. Only then did the old man intimate to his sons and myself that it was time to arise! To me this was a revelation of the trouble and inconvenience these erstwhile rebels would take on behalf of a stranger.

rather than be guilty of any breach of hospitality! Yet I have heard the fact of their living under such conditions—when compelled thereto—cited by some of my countrymen as proof of an innate immodesty, if nothing worse!

Their object in leaving the farm at these seasons was to conserve the water and pasture on the home farm to carry them through the dry months, and not—as some think—a purely nomadic habit. For although with a good rain the desert of Namaqualand and Bushmanland blossoms into a blaze of verdure and flowers with incredible speed, such a rain comes on an average but once in five years; and to keep the stock on which they depend, alive, is a constant battle against adverse conditions.

At the farms I was always allotted a comfortable chamber especially reserved for guests, and was given the best they had to offer. This last was usually better than the Garies fare, for whereas we were limited to a perpetual diet of goat's flesh and rice, on the farms were vegetables, home-made sausages, ostrich biltong, an occasional pauw and other luxuries. Indeed, when they came to Garies for the quarterly nachtmaal, in the big tent wagons, I always welcomed an invitation to some wagon or other for dinner; as in addition to dancing and jollity there was generally a change of diet which every one in the village appreciated.

On one of these occasions I enjoyed the flesh of an ant-bear, which was superior to any pork I ever tasted. It has been my regret ever since that the nocturnal habits of these creatures makes hunting them a profitless pursuit.

When I arrived in the country I could not speak Dutch, and was not particularly keen on learning it. But not one in fifty of the farm population could speak English, and I found it embarrassing to sit for hours in the evenings endeavoring to understand the obviously friendly overtures of my host's often pretty daughters, and listen to their sly whispered comments on my stupidity. It was annoying too, and often dangerous, to be incapable of understanding more than one word in six, of careful route directions to a mat house perhaps twenty waterless miles away. So within three months I acquired a working knowledge of the language, and it is worth recording the circumstances under which I passed the examination that entitled me to extra pay.

Shortly after the magistrate's periodical visit to Garies, I was sent to Hondeklip Bay to arrest a European who had failed to answer to his bail. Reaching the bay, I found that he had belatedly taken the road to Springbokfontein on foot, and as his arrival there ahead of me would involve the loss of the escort duty pay, I rode night and day—in three-hour spells—to overtake him.



W. J. Kuhn

GEMSBOK

Descending a section of the steep old Spektakel copper mine road into a deep ravine, at two A. M. on a bright moonlight morning, I came upon a traveling wagon outspanned. Never doubting that a local Boer was within, I leaned from my saddle and put my hand under the tent-flap, where I found and shook the leg of a sleeping man. As he sat upright in the dark interior, I said in Dutch: "Where are you from?"

"From Springbok," came the answer.

"Do you know C——?" I continued.

"Oh, yes! I know him," responded the awakened man in Dutch.

"Have you seen him—or any white man—traveling on foot?" I demanded.

"No! I have not seen C——, nor any one else. But it is very cold. Won't you have a nip?" he returned in perfect English!

Startled, I raised the flap, and the moonlight revealed the face of our worthy magistrate smiling at my discomfiture!

After apologies for my lack of ceremony had been waved aside, and a stiff whisky disposed of, he continued: "Are you one of the men I passed in Dutch recently?"

"No, sir!" I replied.

"Why did you not try your luck when I was last at Garies?" he persisted; and on my replying that I

had considered my meager knowledge insufficient, he said: "You can try now if you like!"

I did so, and after a dozen simple questions, he said: "You'll do! Go to my assistant in Springbok and tell him I've passed you." This I did, and received the certificate which entitled me to the extra sixpence per diem that a grateful Government allowed for proficiency. Also, I caught my prisoner twenty miles before he reached Springbok!

On one occasion I reached a farmhouse on the eve of the family's departure by wagon for the Free State, and for three days and nights I joined in high feasting, and the jolliest dance I have ever experienced on a bucksail. In spite of hard fare and a hard life, these people possessed a deal of fun, and a physique I have seldom seen equaled elsewhere. Nearly all men, and many women, lacked little of six feet in height, and were always more inclined to laughter than tears.

But enjoyable as the patrols were, it was in the dorp that life took on a never flagging interest. Morning billiards, evening tennis and "sundowner" parties, followed by after-dinner whist at each house in turn, whiled the weeks away. Then, too, we had a Debating Society. On alternate Saturdays a debate or mock parliament, and on the intervening one a musical evening and dance at the house of the married members in turn. About once in three months,

the single members returned the compliment by giving a "flare-up" to which all the families for twenty miles around were invited, and usually came. There were no exclusions. The wealthiest men in the place, and their wives, joined with the poorest in a common indefatigable pursuit of the limited pleasure the situation afforded.

This be it remembered was twenty-three years ago, and three hundred sixty miles from the nearest railway station!

Yet these simple people clung to primitive beliefs with a pathetic persistency. I remember once a baby being ill with pneumonia, and after the local doctor had given up hope, the village quack insisted on trying catskins. Nearly every unlucky cat in the neighborhood was bought, borrowed, or stolen, then slaughtered, and the hot skin stripped from it and wrapped round the sick child,—a mountain of feline sacrifice which I regret to say proved unavailing. It may be, however, that annoyed suburban residents who read this will see in the madness a great deal of method, and regret the absence of a similar belief in their own neighborhood!

Sickness, was, however, the exception. I have often wondered whether the "brak" water we were obliged to drink contributed to the remarkably good health and physique the residents uniformly enjoyed. At first I found the water nauseous, but—strangely

enough—on my return to civilization, and sweet water, I found the latter insipid, and for some time could not grow accustomed to it!

There is little game in the country except ostriches, springbok, paww and Namaqua partridges, although in Bushmanland gemsbok may be found, and also lions. In Namaqualand leopards are plentiful, and on one occasion one of a couple which I afterward found were eating a stolen goat, on a rock under which the river-bed I was following wound, sprang at me as I passed beneath in the moonlight. I shot him dead with my revolver, as—missing his spring—he landed in the road behind me. But I did not investigate the result of my shot until next morning, and made some haste to the nearest farm!

It was the hunting urge which impelled my departure from that hospitable, friendly waste; but I often yearned for the careless happiness of those peaceful days spent in a backwater of life. I should dislike to think that the advent of the motor-car, and the discovery of minerals, had brought to those simple people the evil sophistication which seems inseparable from their coming!

CHAPTER III

HARDY AND FOOLHARDY HUNTERS

THE "man in the street" probably imagines that *all* hunters are "hardy," and fifty years ago such an impression would have been correct. But the development of motor transport, the extension of railways, and the creeping encroachment of civilization upon the forest sanctuaries, has made hunting possible to-day without any very great demands upon endurance, provided one has the money to avail oneself of these aids to travel.

Yet there are still parts of Africa where even a millionaire must face primitive conditions and depend upon his physical powers alone. Indeed, some few rich men still visit such desolate spots, and prefer them, but they are rare. The hunters most usually found in these untrodden by-paths are men who still endeavor to live by hunting, and with the constant retreat of the game into the remoter fastnesses, the tightening up of restrictions, etc., this becomes increasingly difficult. It is this latter class I have in mind.

One whom I knew eighteen years ago was a Dane, and he remains in my memory as the most hardy—and at the same time the most foolhardy—of the many I have known. I met him in the Katanga, and what his life history had been perhaps he alone knew. Six feet tall, with keen blue eyes that seemed to penetrate the soul of the man he spoke to, he was possessed of strength, stamina and endurance, which no amount of wounds or disease seemed able to conquer, and a courage which carried him through or over every obstacle.

His body was a mass of scars inflicted by animals, lead and steel. His right arm had been broken and badly set, so he had practised shooting from the left shoulder until his accuracy, speed and confidence, matched that of any man in the territory. On foot in the trackless forest he could cover from forty to sixty miles between dawn and dark if the need arose. He had, too, an uncanny sense of direction, and could strike unerringly for a point a hundred miles away through gloomy timber, or over sandy plains innocent of road or path. He was a hunter born, yet foolhardy to the point of suicidal folly.

Once he came upon four lions facing him across a donga about two hundred yards away. He could have left them to go upon their "lawful occasions," or have fired from where he stood. Instead of which—and in spite of his natives' protests—he walked up to within about eighty yards, while switched tails and

bared fangs showed the growing anger of the lions. Then he sat down and commenced to shoot, while his natives hastily climbed adjacent trees.

A lion and lioness fell in quick succession; then the other pair charged. One he shot in mid-air as she leaped the donga, and luckily for him, the other fell short and was obliged to scramble up the bank. As his head appeared above the bank, the reckless man seated on the ground shot him through the brain, and he fell backward into the spruit. Four lions in four shots! A fine performance but a foolhardy one. Had the last lion not have failed to clear the donga—or had the last shot missed—the reckless hunter might have met his fate there and then. As it was, he escaped the Nemesis that waits to punish such indiscretion, for four years longer.

Then, with a friend, he wounded a lion and lioness, and both got away into long grass. His friend wished to fire the grass or leave them die at leisure, but the daredevil—always keen on the spectacular—insisted on following them up. Taking the lead, he entered the long grass on the blood spoor, and had hardly taken ten paces when the tawny body of the lioness flashed through the air and struck him to earth, before he could pull the trigger. Going close up, his friend shot the beast through the head, but when her body was dragged aside it was evident that the foolhardy hunter's days were done at last.

With his stomach torn open, the jugular vein severed, and one arm bitten through, it was evident that he could not be moved. In ten minutes—despite all his friend could do—he was dead. In his case an innate reckless courage had been intensified by years of immunity into sheer contempt for danger, and—as always happens eventually—the “wild” which insists upon respect for herself and her creatures had revenged herself at last!

More often, the confidence bred of long experience merely degenerates into carelessness, and a hunter does foolhardy things with no consciousness of folly, and without any desire to be spectacular. Only a year ago a well-known hunter in Northern Rhodesia, who had hunted and captured elephants frequently, was done to death by one of the gray giants before he could defend himself.

Following the spoor of a big bull with two friends, he allowed a native in the rear of the party to carry his gun. The bull happened to be a rogue and waited at a turn in the path for the men his scent had warned him were following him. As the hunter appeared, he charged from ambush without warning. The man's body was picked up later horribly mutilated,—almost destroyed, report said,—and he who should have known better than to follow dangerous game unarmed died like the veriest novice before ever he knew that death was upon him!

It is that carelessness—or foolhardiness—of the “old hand” which lies at the root of so many fatal accidents people find hard to understand. It is seldom the new chum is either foolhardy or careless. When accident overtakes him it is generally due to a mistake traceable to inexperience. The hardy hunter of long-standing who retains respect for the animals hunted, and uses caution in his dealings with them, seldom meets with catastrophe. Always the victims are of the callow or callous class. Those who do not appreciate the danger, or those who despise it. The man in whom knowledge has confirmed courage and confidence, while accentuating carefulness, is rare in the wilds

Yet a few years ago I knew one such intimately. One day we were trekking toward elephant country, when we came upon the spoor of three lions only a few hours old. I suggested following them. Looking at me with a quiet smile, he inquired: “Have you lost any lions?”

“No!” I answered. “But still—we are on the hunt. Why not have a bang at them?”

“Listen!” came the reply. “We’re on the hunt, as you say, and we’re hunting stuff quite as dangerous as lions. But in the words of a certain advertisement, ‘there’s a reason’! We get good money for ivory, and we need money to live. We get nothing for lions! Each elephant and lion you tackle is likely to make

you a little more careless, and bring you a little nearer the day when one of them will spring the unexpected on you. Why take unnecessary risks?"

I wondered if he was afraid. A month or two later the question was answered. Three lions stampeded his cattle at night, and he followed them up, killing all three. When he showed me the skulls I said: "I thought you did not believe in following lions?"

"I followed these to protect my cattle, and to insure myself peaceful nights," he answered. "The country is big enough for all the lions and myself too. I'm content to let it go at that. But if they force a fight they dispute my argument, and I'm bound to make it good!"

In approaching a herd of elephants, or in following wounded lions or buffalo, no man was more careful and patient than he. He had shot over forty elephants and twenty-eight lions: but with each succeeding hunt his caution grew greater. Yet I have seen him deliberately draw an elephant's charge to himself to save a native. He had twice sucked venom from snake bites suffered by natives, and once he plunged into a crocodile-infested river to save a child!

With courage and confidence he united coolness and carefulness, moderation with modesty, and intelligence with indomitability. As for his hardihood, I have seen him walk one hundred twenty miles

on a few strips of biltong and a waterbag of water, arriving in camp to send food and water back to his exhausted natives! The latter had a confidence in him which they never accord to the foolhardy type.

For the native is not impressed by spectacular "stunts," as newcomers often believe. He has seen and heard too much of the ways of wild creatures. He says of the reckless hunter: "That man will one day be killed, and we may be blamed. Or else he will get *us* killed. He is not a good man to go with!" And the hunter who emphasizes his nerve by stunts wonders why the natives are so nervous!

Experience is only valuable when it teaches. There are men who never learn. The native, who lives in the forest always, counts his experience not in months or years, but in generations; and the one great lesson he has learned in dealing with the forest lords is to be *careful*.

A hardy Australian hunter passed through Cape Town in April, 1927, en route to one of those places which lie at "the back o' beyond," there to spend seven months alone in the solitude he loves. Prior to the late war he made his first trip in search of lions. The first lion he shot mauled him severely, and left him with his right arm permanently crippled. This is his third visit since then, and on each occasion he has shot lions without accident.

I met him the other day just before his return

to Australia. He has shot three big lions and three leopards since I saw him in April. He got them in this fashion: Pegging out a kill on the ground in such fashion that it would be difficult to drag away, he built himself a bush shelter about six feet from it, and awaited Leo's arrival through the hours of darkness. He had purposely hidden so close, because he could not see his rifle sights and wished to make sure of killing. One lion he shot nearly destroyed his shelter in its death struggle! As he has already published the story of his first hunt, these recent adventures may also be recorded in due course.

Meanwhile, it may be said that he detests the spectacular. The nerve he exhibits is not for the edification of his natives, but solely for the purpose of getting the quarry. Experience in his case has instilled respect for the wild creatures, without lessening his confidence in his own powers. For this reason it will be a particularly clever beast that "gets" him. Hardihood and courage he possesses in full measure, but foolhardiness will never be imputed to him justly.

One other instance of foolhardiness leading to premature death may be included in these reminiscences. The hunter in question was a Russian whom I met many years ago in Central Katanga.

Often, for a wager, he would deliberately approach a sleeping elephant bull from the windward side, and fire at thirty paces. Only by virtue of a

bushcraft that enabled him to move like a cat, could he do this. That he did so successfully was due to a deadly certainty of aim and surprising sprinting powers. His usual costume was a soft loin-cloth covered by a shirt, and a pair of hide sandals. Yet in spite of his airy costume and his speed, he often escaped the wounded beasts only by leaving his shirt and a great deal of flesh and skin, on the trees and bushes in the path of his mad rushes for safety. Yet such narrow escapes seemed only to stimulate a perverted taste for further follies!

Seizing comatose snakes by the tail and whirling them round his head before hurling them from him; following wounded lions into cover; and swimming crocodile-infested streams instead of crossing by the ford or bridge, were all stunts in a repertoire he continually displayed, apparently in an insatiable thirst for notoriety. But Nemesis—in the shape of a leopard—overtook him at last.

Camped one night with a young Dutch companion sharing his tent, he was awakened by a yelp and scrambling sound outside his tent, while two of his three dogs rushed into the tent growling uneasily. Securing torches and his acetylene lamp, the pair went to investigate, and presently discovered the spoor of a big leopard at a spot where blood, and some hair, seemed to show that the beast had seized the third dog and made off with it. The dog was of a mongrel

terrier breed, and the Russian started at once on the spoor, armed with his shotgun.

The native torch-bearers promptly refused to accompany him before daylight, and the young Dutchman earnestly attempted to dissuade him, pointing out that the dog was already dead, and that the risk was not justified. But the daredevil insisted, and was even prepared to go alone, so at last his companion followed him with the acetylene flare, while he walked ahead with the shotgun.

Under the tall trees of the Katanga forests there is usually a plentiful undergrowth of short bush and tangled vegetation, and their camping environs were typical. They had proceeded only about two hundred yards when without any warning a yellow streak flashed upward from beneath dark foliage, and the Russian staggered back with an evil small head fastened beneath his chin, while two forepaws hooked themselves to his shoulders, and two sets of hind claws fastened in his stomach.

He dropped the useless gun and seized the throat of the leopard, while the Dutchman set down the lamp hastily and snatched the fallen gun. But for a moment he could not use it for fear of killing the Russian. Eventually he forced the muzzle under the leopard's head, while its throat was held in the despairing grip of the almost insensible hunter. Then he fired, almost blowing the head from the body, and as it sank

to the ground the Russian fell forward on top of the body.

The young man saw at a glance that aid was impossible. The teeth of the animal had penetrated the jugular vein on one side and nearly torn the windpipe out, while the flensing claws of the hind feet had played havoc with the stomach. Indeed, the victim neither recovered consciousness nor spoke again, and lived but a very few moments afterward. Speedy burial and an official report was all that could be done for a man who might have been alive to-day but for the mistaken contempt for the wild creatures his frequent reckless—and successful—challenges had inspired!

CHAPTER IV

LURE AND LOOT OF LONELY PLACES

WHEN I first traveled through ninety miles of stark wilderness between Selukwe and Victoria, in Southern Rhodesia twenty-five years ago, the only spaces I had known were those of the great sea wastes. And always civilization had accompanied me, in the stir and bustle and discipline of a great ship, while a few short days or weeks away lay London or New York, Liverpool or Sydney, Southampton or Calcutta. I had never felt that I had left the world of men, and I had never known silence—the silence that speaks insistently of past and present and future.

There in the Rhodesian solitudes I felt that I had stepped over the edge of the world I had known, and that the voices of giants whispered in a language strange to me. I felt fascinated yet repelled; eagerly curious yet afraid; longing to adventure farther, yet desirous of retreat. After eighteen months I yielded to the desire to revisit the scenes I had left, and tell of the charm and mystery and fascination of those I had found. I returned to England.

Then a strange thing happened. I had left the silent wastes with delight, reveling in the prospects of revisiting the haunts of men. That delight grew less during each day of a week spent in Cape Town, and the morning the ship left the docks I felt panic as she drew away from the quayside, a sheer terror lest I be prevented from returning to the solitudes I had left so gladly! I felt as an exiled monarch might who saw the shores of his kingdom receding from view.

For an impression was suddenly born that, amid the frowning hills and silent wastes where I had wandered, I had been a king, and that in the world to which I was going, I should become again a cipher—a creature without power or prestige.

Amid the roar of London, Liverpool, Manchester and other cities, that feeling intensified, and when—a few months later—I found myself patrolling vast distances alone, in the silent, sun-baked solitudes of Namaqualand, I felt exultation at a stark desolation that to most men brought only depression. I had discovered the lure of the lonely places—the lure which I have followed since then throughout the length and breadth of Africa, without pause or halt.

For it is in the “never-never” lands that man achieves that self-expression and dominance, the desire for which is deep-rooted in human psychology,—the desire which has inspired his triumphs over matter, and provoked his conflicts with men.

To ride alone in the silent small hours five thousand feet down a rocky trail bathed in moonlight, into the shadowed ravine beneath, and watch the stealthy departure of a leopard from the rocks where he has made an ambush he dare not maintain before one's advance; to follow the broad white elephant trail through forty miles of silvered, whispering forest between starlight and dawn, and hear the voices of great killers protest at an invasion they dare not challenge; to stagger exhausted to a water-hole long after hardy black bodies have acknowledged weariness and defeat, and to know the joy of rest and food and drink, earned by endurance and sweat and toil; to listen to the inaudible converse of one's soul with elemental voices, and to both hear and understand: these things comprise the lure of the lonely places.

In such surroundings a man knows his immortality and revels in it, on this side of the border-line, for he contacts daily with the eternal. Problems of existence cease to concern him, and are replaced by those of destiny, problems which he finds life all too short to solve, and impossible to study amid the roar of human and mechanical sounds.

He is of the world yet apart from it, and as the onlooker sees most of the game, so he sees in the happenings of to-day the sequel of to-morrow. While mankind argues the wisdom of taking some turning in the road, he examines the terminus of the debated

by-path, and when he sees—as a spectator on a high mountain might—that this ends in a morass, and mourns because he can not warn those at the cross-roads. Nature whispers: “My child, whom I have nursed, mourn not! For all things are written. When have you known me to fail in reward of obedience? See to it only that you obey, and leave matters of high destiny to high control!” So he goes on his way calm, content and comforted, and that is the crowning lure. A calm certainty of wisdom and beneficence behind the veil of matter, which all men seek at heart, but which few find amid the crowded forums of the world.

The first human vice which the hermit of the solitudes must conquer is avarice and the love of luxury. To achieve—or at least to enjoy—wealth, he must forsake the lonely places. Yet the gods of the wilderness are ever kind. Food and drink and body clothing, aye, and medicines to combat bodily ills—may be had by the expenditure of bodily and mental effort, for the law that life shall depend on effort holds good in the solitudes also. But effort is never demanded to the limit of capacity, except as a penalty for stupidity.

On the degree of intelligence exercised Nature bases the proportion of leisure she allows to each. To the highest she awards the most, that it may be used in further study of her laws. The slothful,

primitive swamp dweller, and the hunting Bushman, who loathe sustained labor, must hunt daily or die. But the black man who levels the forest, tills the fruitful soil, and builds granaries to garner the harvest, may for six months in the year hunt meat and ivory, to strengthen his stomach and exchange for fat cattle. He may gather the fruits, and fish and fowl, her sanctuaries hold in abundance; or he may lie in the sun and debate the doings of "the mad white men," who are always working yet never grow wealthy; who are always in a hurry yet die with their work unfinished!

For in the lonely places is much material as well as spiritual loot, if little of wealth. Food in abundance and infinite variety; building materials of strength and beauty, awaiting only the artistry of man; skins and ivory sufficient to purchase all his esthetic instincts demand; even gold and diamonds to tempt his allegiance. But these last Nature scatters sparingly; for where they are found, there is soon one lonely place the less, and the lure vanishes.

Yet it was the hope of material loot that led me into the forest silences at one period, and induced me to take big risks: to stake both liberty and life, only to discover before long that the successful gamble itself was the greater gain; the stark, joyous challenge to superior forces, the greater lure; and the material loot of little consequence at long last! It

was well that this should be so, for the loot was limited and speedily dissipated, while the lure was limitless and abides with me still!

I was wandering in Belgian territory at a time when the rails had but just reached it, and all the "bad men" in Africa—the hardy, adventurous sort—seemed to have gravitated there. One of them took me as a partner and we went after elephants. He was a good shot, and reckless as I, so that we did very well, and soon amassed a large quantity of ivory.

But we had no licenses, and strongly objected to paying a tithe of what we had won with sweat, and toil, and danger, to the Belgian Government, which after all, had stolen the country from M'siri, one-time chief of the Garanganze. So we decided to drift down south over the British border, and across to Lake Tanganyika district, leaving the Belgian towns some hundreds of miles to the west.

We were within a week of the border when the trusty scouts we employed in every village, sent word to say that a Belgian officer and ten native soldiers (askari) were making for our camp and would arrive next evening. They had made many inquiries about our hunting activities and the ivory we had with us. This message arrived at sunset.

We weighed the pros and cons of the situation, and my partner said: "Look here! If we 'muzzle,' we shall have 'em on our trail the whole way. I do

not feel like yielding a pound of ivory. Why not meet the show of force with a greater show? Why not 'put the wind up' this 'Bulamadari'? They rely on a soft capture always. If it looks to him like a fight he'll think twice about it!"

So next morning we unpacked twenty of the old muzzle-loaders we carried to "square" certain head-men, and the same number of second-hand khaki tunics and shorts—carried for the same purpose. In an hour or two we had twenty of our heftiest carriers looking like armed and uniformed askari, and then my "pal" took them into the bush and instructed them in certain drill movements to increase the illusion.

At sundown that evening a command to halt—given in French—rang out on the edge of our clearing, and ten native soldiers formed line and grounded arms. From the opposite side debouched twenty "soldiers" in half-sections, who at my pal's command in Swahili formed line and halted facing them. Then to the astonished Belgian my partner said: "Good evening, Monsieur! I suppose you want our ivory and us? But I'm afraid you can't have either. You see we are just two to one. To say nothing of our carriers! Still. We need not be unfriendly about it. A drink and a good dinner is much better than 'scrapping.' Come and talk it over!"

For a few moments French expletives filled the quiet air, then the Lieutenant laughed sourly and said:



SABLE ANTELOPE

"It is much strange I did not hear you have ze troops with you! I will drink, yes, and eat; but this is a much serious affaire you comprehend, my friends?"

My partner laughed and said: "Nothing is serious but thirst. You have one, and so have we. Come, let us quench them!"

Over whiskies and sparklets the Belgian laughed again more spontaneously, and said: "You are ze much droll pair, non? You have ze arms and ze askaris, you shoot ze elephant, and you no pay. All much bad. Much serious. Me, I go back and make report, and ze big company askari come to seek you. So I say, my friends, you go much quick see? You not go quick, you stay in ze prison much long time."

To impress him with the folly of a surprise attack, my friend said: "You will never see us in prison. Lieutenant. Dead you may see us. For we are fighters, and fighters sometimes get killed. But it is better to die quickly than stay a long time in prison, eh?"

The Belgian looked shrewdly at him, and seemed satisfied of his sincerity, for he said with a slight sigh: "Perhaps yes! I no want to kill you, so I go make ze report, but I go much quickly, my friends!"

That night my friend and I changed our four amateur sentries hourly, and gave no opportunity for treachery, even though we had filled the Belgian fairly full of whisky before he retired!

As his rearguard swung out of sight next morning, my friend said: "Is not such a life worth while? That man has less courage and intelligence than we, yet in civilization he would merely have blown a whistle, and we should have been pulled down as the buck is pulled down by wild dogs! Here in God's open, a man can use the qualities God gave him, and the battle goes to the best man. To have beaten that chap as we did is worth more to me than the ivory!"

And in this I agreed. The instinctive lust of power and dominance can be satisfied only in the naked solitudes, or in the conclaves of millionaires. That satisfaction is worth more than the millions, as those who possess both would acknowledge if they spoke truly! In five days we were in British territory, and although I believe we were followed, the pursuit never reached us.

During the month that followed, we enjoyed repeatedly that exultation that comes to the victor in a contest of brain and body and nerve. We arranged with an Arab trader on the German side of the lake to buy our ivory, and to keep us posted regarding the movements of the British officials. Then we went into a reserve which natives call "the place where the elephants die." Those we met looked remarkably healthy, but we assisted a few to die, which had certainly not come there for that purpose! As the news of our operations leaked through, the Native

Commissioner a few hundred miles away would pack his kit and sally forth on a visit to us. We usually knew the date of his departure and his proposed camping-places, so that we were unfortunately absent when he called.

After a bit the officials became more cunning, and once or twice a weary scout arrived after sundown to tell us the pursuit was camped only ten miles away and marching fast to overtake us. There followed a night march through the silvered, whispering forest, to a camp perhaps thirty or forty miles away. And as we marched silently through the shadowed aisles, a sense of kingship and power lightened our steps, a triumph in the veldcraft and endurance which always left the pursuit behind, which even the defeated charge of the mighty beasts we hunted never inspired!

For "man" is the greatest "game" of all, and a victory over one of our "co-heirs" with the odds on his side was worth more to us than a dozen over the mighty, courageous, but unreasoning beasts. And in those days the eternal truth came to me that the lure and the loot are really *one*; that the finest loot of all is the spiritual elixir that gives to man a perception of the god that lives in him.

Since the lure is spiritual and esthetic, Nature sees to it that in the tracts of earth where it is greatest, and gold or precious stones or timbered wealth

exist, which might destroy it, sickness and death shall stand guard over both lure and loot; that only the strong shall survive to seize either. The weak and faint-hearted die or depart, afraid to look upon the naked face of Nature which illumines Destiny.

So on the tangled forests of the Amazon; on the primeval tracts of central Africa; on the caribou-haunted plains of the Arctic circle; on the bleak splendor of the Russian steppes, thousands look and long, and faint and shudder, and turn again to the safe cities; and only the few press forward to the voice of the lure and enter into dominion. To each comes loot sufficient to live, and enjoy the living; and to a few, wealth. To some of these last the lure has already transcended loot and luxury, and it is of these Robert Service sings when he says:

“There’s gold, and it’s haunting and haunting;
It’s luring me on as of old;
Yet it isn’t the gold that I’m wanting
So much as just *finding* the gold
It’s the great, big, broad land ’way up yonder,
It’s the forests where silence has lease;
It’s the beauty that fills me with wonder,
It’s the stillness that fills me with peace.”

One such passed through Livingstone recently. A very wealthy man, he had come all the way from Australia to go and live for seven months alone in a district bordering on the Kalahari, as he had done at two-year intervals for fourteen years. It is a district

where food and water are scarce, and hardships many, yet he said to me: "I feel like a schoolboy out for a holiday when I get out here! Thank God it will be many a long year still before the motor-car hunters come this way!"

The lure of the lonely places is "the peace the Lord has hidden in the secret heart of the wild." Loot there is too, but the spirits which seek the loot alone, and are deaf and blind to the lure, faint in their thousands by the way. Nature has ordered it so. It will be an ill day for humanity when none exists to whom the lure calls louder!

CHAPTER V

"HARD CITIZENS" OF THE "BLACK NORTH"

AFRICA has been singularly free of the "bad-man" type which has imparted some romance, and inflicted considerable loss of life and property, to the American West and the Australian back-blocks. It seems as though that type were dying out under the conditions of civilization. The bad men of to-day seem to come from cities and go to cities. They specialize in a different sort of roguery, and leave the waste places severely alone! At all events, our "hardest citizens" have only arrived since Johannesburg and Cape Town grew up, and when they leave these cities it is usually for a spell in gaol, or on "urgent private affairs," for parts unknown!

Yet in the early days Africa attracted a few of the "Ned Kelly" and "King Fisher" type. Fellows who would rob a bank, but refuse to pick a pocket; who would rob the wealthy traveler of all he had, but share their last meal with a needy wayfarer. Big men, most of them—mentally and physically. Bad men, in the sense that they broke laws and would kill if necessary.

But usually they broke laws for the sheer love of hazard rather than for gain; and if they killed, it was in open combat, ordinarily with the odds against them. Murder was as alien to them as meanness.

Perhaps the hardest citizen of any I have met was an Irish-American whom we will call Jack Howard—the Christian patronymic being really his own. I met him in the Katanga about 1910, and knew him fairly well until the end of 1911, when I went south again. About five feet ten inches tall, spare but well-proportioned, he possessed a frame of the “wire and whipcord” sort that nothing seemed to tire, and his courage was as amazing as his endurance.

When I met him, he was trading in partnership with a “remittance man” whose brother was a colonel in the British Army. He was a gentlemanly, good-natured soul, but unstable as water, with an incurable thirst for whisky, and a penchant for gambling of any sort. The trading operations of the pair consisted in putting a few bales of goods in the store and leaving them to a native to sell, so that it is doubtful if the business ever showed a profit. Still, it provided them with a home, and when his partner’s funds were exhausted—which was usually within two months of arrival—Jack would take to the elephant trail, or adopt more devious methods of “raising the wind” until the next quarter’s allowance of two hundred pounds reached his partner.

His exploits covered a range of country extending from the Transvaal border to the French Congo. There is space here to relate only a few of them.

Trekking through the Bechuanaland Protectorate some years before I met him, he and his partner were surrounded one day by a threatening crowd of Bechuanas who had lost some cattle, and insisted—rightly or wrongly—that they had found them in Jack's mob of "traded" beasts. Jack answered them in a fashion to inflame their natural insolence, and eventually grabbed his rifle and told them to clear out. In reply, one of them fired a "pot-leg" slug which broke Jack's right collar-bone.

He had not wanted the slug, but he *had* wanted them to take the offensive. Jerking his rifle to his left shoulder—as only an ambidextrous man could—he did some rapid firing, and in five minutes the natives were in full flight, leaving three on the field wounded. That night he sold the cattle to a trader ten miles away, and later examination discovered none of the missing native cattle among them. Official inquiries showed that the natives had attacked first, and Jack was exonerated. But he had always to fire from the left shoulder afterward, though it never affected his accuracy.

In Southern Rhodesia he was several times sentenced to imprisonment during the next few years, under various aliases, but invariably escaped within a

month. Under the alias of Jackson he put five revolver bullets into a miner named Nicholson, in the Abercorn Hotel in Bulawayo in 1903. This was the sequel to a game of cards. Then he walked through the crowd with one cartridge left in the weapon, seized the first bicycle he saw, and vanished. I was one of the patrol which searched the neighborhood for two days unsuccessfully. Nicholson—wonderful to relate—went to the hospital and recovered! This Jack admitted to me when I challenged him from his remembered description eight years later!

He was next heard of some months after the Abercorn affair, when in company with an escaped German convict he held up a police patrol of two men and confiscated their horses and rifles. The German was recaptured I believe, but "Jackson" again disappeared.

Under another alias he secured a job as a ganger in Northern Rhodesia; but his idea of ganging was to put the natives to work and then go off with his rifle! The Permanent Way Inspector—a "tubby" little Cockney—held different views, and reported Jack. He was duly discharged, and in revenge, waited one day for the P. W. I. on a bridge over a river. When the trolley arrived he stopped it, and seizing the little man by the scruff and the breeches, he dropped him from the bridge into the river!

A moment later he observed that his victim could

not swim, so with a curse on his ill-luck he jumped in and pulled him out again! The P. W. I. was profuse in thanks to his rescuer, but lost no time in wiring to his superiors and the police, demanding that our bad man be removed. So Jack removed *himself* and disappeared yet farther north.

In the Katanga he went after elephants without the formality of taking out a license. In due course a traveling official heard of this, and went to arrest him. Next day, Jack shifted his camp, leaving that official securely bound to a tree! He was released by natives, and duly reported the matter; but when he was instructed to go with a companion and arrest Jack, he promptly reported sick! As he had not learned his captor's name, nothing could be done until he was fit for duty again. By that time Jack had left the district, and the pursuit was abandoned.

On the last occasion when he "put the fear of God"—as he phrased it—into the Belgian police, he had made the country too hot to hold him by the following exploit, for which a stroke of bad luck was responsible.

Needing whisky supplies for his sick chum, he borrowed a ganger's trolley unknown to the ganger, and in Sakania took liberal samples of the whisky. Returning to his store forty miles up the line, he was traveling at speed down a grade, when the trolley left the rails and overturned. An assegai belonging to a

native penetrated his stomach, and believing him dead, the boys ran away to avoid trouble. Then Jack, with set teeth, and a determination to live, *cratched* the quarter of a mile to the nearest cottage, and collapsed! The doctor afterward confessed his amazement that a man could perform such a feat and live! But for six months he was condemned to inactivity, and expenses accumulated.

By the time he was "fit" again, his friend had arrived at one of his lean periods; so the pair set out to secure some salable ivory. They were successful, but on the way back, their carriers deserted when within a day's march of the line. Jack promptly invaded a near-by kraal at sunset, and demanded carriers. The natives refused assistance, so he sat down and said: "Very well! Any one leaving the kraal I shall shoot. Stay there and think it over. If when the moon is there"—and he pointed to where it would be by eight o'clock—"you have not come to work, I shall burn the kraal and shoot you all!"

And at the stated time, he set fire to the first hut. That was enough for the natives, and carriers were soon forthcoming. They arrived home at sunrise, but the natives must have promptly reported Jack's actions, for while he and his chum were at breakfast, a Belgian policeman appeared. He walked up to Jack and placing a hand on his shoulder said: "I arrest you, Monsieur Howard!"

Before he could move, Jack had seized his wrist with one hand, and whipped the Browning pistol from his belt with the other. Presenting the weapon at his head, he said: "No, you don't! I arrest *you*! Hands up, and don't make a noise!"

Confounded by his swift action, the policeman complied, and Jack promptly trussed him up and gagged him, with the assistance of his protesting partner. An hour later, the pair left with their personal effects and the ivory, on a ganger's trolley.

Nearing Sakania they abandoned the trolley, and sent a message to a friend in town. That night he went out and purchased the ivory, warning them that the police were actively searching for them. They started to walk the fifteen miles to British territory through the bush. For to Howard day and night were the same, and a fifty-mile walk over roadless country, in buckskin moccasins, was an average day.

But the police must have got wind of their presence, for a mile or two before they crossed the border they heard voices and the clink of accoutrements behind them. They increased their pace, and were no sooner over the border than Jack sat down, and placed a pile of cartridges on the ground beside him. Facing in the direction they had come from, he said: "I'll give these swabs a parting salute. We're in British territory now, and if they come over with arms in their hands, I'll send 'em back in a hurry!"

In vain his partner urged a continuance of their journey to Bwanamkubwa—a few miles south. Jack sat on determinedly, and very soon two Belgians and six native policemen appeared through the trees. Jack yelled a command to halt, and as the astonished patrol obeyed, he informed them that he was on British soil, and taunted them with their inability to take him. That enraged them, and the Europeans commanded the natives to march forward and seize him.

At once he opened rapid fire, and his partner told me his rifle sounded like a machine-gun! Most of the bullets flew high—as he intended they should—for he wanted amusement rather than revenge. But one must have hit a native accidentally, for there was a sudden yell, and next moment the patrol had stampeded. The two Belgians cursed, and shook their fists at him as he sat in the moonlight, but they, too, thought discretion the better part, and soon followed their subordinates. At that time there was no extradition possible from or to the Katanga.

Yet a month later, when I was traveling from a Rhodesian siding to Sakania, I was amazed to see Jack boarding the train. Knowing what had occurred, I said to him: "Do you think it wise to take such risks to recover a stolen rifle? Why not let me get it for you? If they get you 'inside' you can't hope to escape *always!*"

He shrugged and answered: "If they give me a

month I'll do it. It's not worth arguing about. But if they make it more, I *won't* do it!"

"But how can you always be sure of that?" I persisted.

"Take it from me," he said grimly, "if you're willing to gamble your life against liberty, and the police and warders know you mean it, very few of them will gamble *theirs* against eight 'bob' a day!" And thinking of the amazing story of Creswick and other famous escapees, and his own numerous successes at gaol-breaking, I felt he was a student of psychology!

He went back, got the rifle he sought, half killed the thief—who imagined he dared not return—and escaped without challenge. But I thought again of his words, when over a year later he was in Broken Hill gaol, sentenced to twelve months' hard labor on the first of five charges, and escaped on the day of his sentence!

As usual, his own bravado had brought him to gaol. His partner had left him and gone to the diamond diggings six months before, and he had found life more difficult in consequence. He solved the problem by stocking a trading store at the expense of Katanga traders, in the following fashion. Climbing on a goods train at some lonely tank at night, he would select a truck containing trade goods, and once on the move he heaved off various bales and boxes near to gangers' and pumpers' cottages where he had

confederates. Then he would sheet up the truck and drop off on the first up-grade and walk back.

Naturally, complaints arose, and the railway people were thoroughly mystified. Trucks were examined and found intact at one station, only to be discovered broached at the end of a sixty-mile run through uninhabited country! So detectives were set to work, and for some time were hopelessly at fault.

Meeting the official in charge of them one night in the hotel at Broken Hill, the devil of braggadocio rose in Jack and he said: "Look here! Your detectives don't seem much good! Why not give *me* a job? I know this country. I'll soon find the stuff for you!"

"Very well!" the official agreed. "I'll give you a job!" And he *did!*

Knowing where to look, Jack soon "found" some missing goods; but unfortunately for him, the detectives found some too, in possession of a pumper. The latter imagined Jack had gone over to the other side, and promptly revealed the whole procedure! Jack was arrested suddenly. On the day he was sentenced on the first charge, a man playing tennis on the Broken Hill court said: "Well, we have the bold Jack at last! I wonder how long we shall keep him this time?"

Twenty minutes later there was a shot at the gaol,

and soon came the news that Jack had gone. He has never been seen since! His method had been simple and audacious as usual. He had called to the native warder on duty outside his cell, and told him to call the sergeant major, as he was very ill. The native complied. As the sergeant major entered the cell, Jack crouched behind the door and launched a terrific blow to the point of his jaw, which felled him in an instant. Then he grabbed the N. C. O.'s revolver from his belt, dealt the startled native a stunning blow with the butt, seized his carbine and cartridges, and headed into the bush. As stated, he was never recaptured, and his ultimate fate is uncertain.

Yet this man—who would deal death without a qualm, and get money by any means—would risk his life without hesitation for a perfect stranger, and would give the last sovereign he had to a passing tramp! I have heard him say that the only thing he wanted money for was to visit his old mother in Ireland. He would talk of her with real affection, and would often resolve to “cut out the booze” to save the cash to go see her again!

Otherwise, he had no use for money. Only the getting of it attracted him. Once he had it, he flung it away. In the same way he would take the most fantastic risks in the hunting veld, for the sheer joy of the danger, and more than one man owes his life to him. He was a born “soldier of fortune,” born two

centuries too late! But it is well for the owners of the huge sums which travel long distances through uninhabited country in safety that few of his type have come to Africa!

Only one other whom I have met approached Howard for sheer reckless courage and endurance, and joy in law-breaking for its own sake. Strangely enough, he too was an Irishman! We will call him Reilly. He had fought through the Boer War in the Cape Police, and was a recruit with me in the B. S. A. Police in Bulawayo in 1903. He was, in fact, a member of the same patrol which sought the elusive Jackson after the Abercorn Hotel affair.

He was a slim-built young fellow about five feet eleven in height, a very useful athlete and boxer, and a first-class shot. But as a recruit in Bulawayo he gave no indication of the outlaw soul that slept within him. I left him there and never saw him again. But three years later I—in common with the public—received startling news of him. He had been transferred to an outstation about fifty miles from Bulawayo; close to a fairly large gold mine.

One day he obtained a month's leave and left camp. Next day the mule-cart taking the monthly output of gold to Bulawayo was held up by three men and robbed, the leading mules being shot. The mine official in charge of the gold became insane from the shock, and could give no evidence; but on the native

driver's testimony Reilly was arrested. The gold was found buried close to the scene of the hold-up, but the other men could not be identified, and Reilly was tried alone in Bulawayo. He had shot the mules and taken a leading part throughout, and this had led to the driver's identification of him. But the evidence was insufficient to convict, and he was acquitted.

There is a queer kink in human nature which induces it to admire and flatter a rogue, if only there be the elements of romance and courage in his roguery. Sometimes even those elements are dispensed with, as I recently reflected when I saw London placarded with portraits of Horatio Bottomley! Reilly was fêted and flattered, and enterprising publicans competed for his services as barman. So that his discharge from the police did not leave him long unemployed! But his tastes were apparently for a more active life, and he soon left Bulawayo.

He was next heard of as one of a gang of four men who occupied the Caprivi Strip on the Zambesi. Though nominally German, there were no officials within many hundreds of miles of the river, and although outlawed by the Northern Rhodesian administration, the four men reigned as uncrowned monarchs of the territory they had occupied: hunting, trading, collecting hut-tax, and administering the law as the spirit moved them! A book might be written on the adventures and exploits of these four; but at the moment I am only concerned with Reilly.

The last exploit of his before he disappeared was rather humorous. A Greek cattle trader was coming down-river with three or four hundred pounds in gold, and en route he called to buy in the outlaws' territory, at the same time advising the natives not to sell to them! His conscience, and his knowledge of Reilly's reputation made him anxious to avoid a meeting.

One evening near sunset, soon after he had camped, a good-looking and pleasant-spoken young man arrived, and suggested spending the night with him. The Greek was rather glad of his company, and over "sundowners" he became communicative. He confessed his fear of Reilly, and admitted that he had a large sum with him.

"But," said the guest, "you've nothing to fear! If he rolls up, just make him drunk and then tie him up! You know how to tie a man up, don't you?"

The Greek confessed his ignorance, and the young man said: "It's quite easy! Sit down in that chair and I'll show you! If you do it right, he could never move until the police came!"

Taking some cord and some riems from boxes and packages, he proceeded to tie up the interested Greek very thoroughly. Having finished, he said: "Now see if you can get loose."

The Greek tried unsuccessfully, and when he admitted defeat the young man said: "I thought you were fixed. Well, I'm Reilly! I'll just remove that belt you have on, and say good evening!"

He did, and next day showed the belt to a man at Kazangula who is at the Victoria Falls as I write, saying: "I've gone in for highway robbery, and teaching 'Dagoes' to keep off my preserves!"

The Greek was the laughing-stock of the country when his loss became known, and even to-day the story always evokes a laugh. What became of Reilly is uncertain. Some years later his people wrote to the German Resident—who had arrived in the interim—for news of him; but none was forthcoming.

Rumors were rife at one time that one of his mates had shot him in a quarrel, but the man who is said to have done so—now a law-abiding citizen—emphatically denies any knowledge of his fate. It turned out that Reilly's people were well-to-do, and that the name he had enlisted under was fictitious.

He, too, possessed tireless endurance and reckless courage. Stories are told of his walking sixty miles a day after elephants, and deliberately approaching the beasts from the windward side for the sheer joy of matching his speed and agility against their charge!

But the finest character of the hard-citizen type I have met, died a few years ago in the person of Ben Johnson. The only laws he ever broke were game laws, and in addition to great courage, he possessed the intellect of a scholar, and the idealism of the poet.

It was in 1923 that I went with my wife to live on the Quando River, which is the border between

Barotseland and Portuguese Angola. Barotseland lies along the Zambesi River in a northwesterly direction from the Victoria Falls. It is a distance of eighty to a hundred miles from Zambesi to the Cuando, and the country between the two rivers is most inhospitable in character, being nearly waterless for several months of the year. Even when water is available, it is more nearly akin to liquid mud than aqua pura, being obtained from shallow pits. The native inhabitants are sparsely settled, and of the poorest class. Naturally, they are not cattle owners, as the Barotse are.

Needless to say, there are neither officials nor missionaries resident in this area, nor on the Cuando itself. For whatever the general impression may be, these two classes of African residents do not favor such poverty-stricken areas in their selection of a domicile. Perhaps one can not blame them.

My wife was the first white woman who ever went to reside there, and even bachelors many years resident on the Zambesi admired her courage more than my prudence in taking such a step. When I add that the nearest post official was one hundred twenty-five miles away, and the nearest township a hundred miles farther, overseas readers will probably agree with them.

There were two white men residents on the Cuando, both of whom were in their separate ways "human documents." One was a Greek who for

twelve or fourteen years had lived the nomadic life of a hippo hunter. Utterly unscrupulous, avaricious and mean, yet content with the barest necessities of existence, he was practically a "white native." Yet he possessed one trait in common with his neighbor, viz., undoubted physical courage.

Ben Johnson was the other, and he was the very antithesis of the Greek. Contemptuous of man-made laws as such, he had yet constructed for himself a very rigid and admirable code of conduct and scrupulously observed it. He, also, had been a hunter for many years, but was utterly indifferent to financial gain. Physically able to endure the hardest conditions of existence, he still appreciated the creature comforts when means to provide them were available, and was generous to a fault. Utterly fearless, there was never anything spectacular or foolhardy in his actions, as was often the case in those of the Greek.

I have said he was indifferent to financial gain. I should perhaps have said that he was bitterly scornful and contemptuous of it. Since he was convinced that a man whose life he had saved, and one whom he had rescued financially, had united to rob him of all he had while absent on active service, he had some reason to be!

The foregoing brief sketch will convince the reader that little sympathy could exist between two such men. When I add that for several years before



HYENAS

I went to the Quando the Greek had been maltreating and robbing natives, had broken game and cattle laws, and whenever possible had placed the onus upon his neighbor and slandered him upon all occasions, while attributing to Johnson's information several convictions and fines in the British courts, it will be equally easy to understand the spirit of implacable hostility which existed at the time of my advent.

This hostility culminated in May, 1923. The Greek went to Johnson's camp and made various accusations against him. Johnson told him to clear out if he would avoid trouble. He went, but only to return a few moments later. Sensing trouble from his manner, Johnson slipped an automatic pistol into his pocket. The Greek handed him a letter purporting to concern him, and asked him to read it. As he sat perusing the document the Greek snatched up a native hoe and aimed a savage blow at his head, spitting curses and threats at the same time. Johnson threw himself back in the chair and fired through his pocket, killing the Greek where he stood.

Having buried the Greek and sent a full account of the affair to the Portuguese authorities, Johnson sat in his camp to await the result, steadfastly refusing to leave it, even to hunt, until the affair was settled. In October an official came down, accepted Johnson's statement, and removed the dead man's very considerable property.

In connection with this property I may mention that a notorious bad character descended upon the Creek's store a month after his death, and decamped with some three hundred pounds' worth of effects. Johnson went after him alone—a two-hundred-mile journey—recovered the goods at the risk of his own life, and returned them to the store, whence they were finally removed by the Portuguese officials. He frequently said to me that whatever happened, he would never benefit by one iota from the Creek's death, and that in "ridding the world of a rascal, his life's record would show at least one worthy act!" The would-be thief was afterward captured by the Portuguese and sent to Huilla—near Mossamedes—to be imprisoned.

In December of that year I went on business to the Union, and on my return heard news which was not altogether unexpected, viz., that Johnson had first sent away all his natives, then shot his cattle, burned his camp and effects, and finally—standing on the river bank so that his body would fall into the stream—had shot himself. It appeared that in falling, his foot had caught in a bunch of reeds and his body was thus recovered by natives and buried.

People who did not know the dead man regarded his shooting his cattle as evidence of insanity. Others hold the view that self-destruction is *always* evidence of mental disease. It is because I believe both views to be wrong—in this case—and because I feel that

the true reasons for his action have an educative value for that small percentage of humans who sometimes think of other subjects than money-getting, that I am writing this brief sketch of a man whom I knew rather intimately.

I use the word “intimately” in a relative sense. The intimate knowledge of men and women which depends upon knowledge of their life history, was never possible to any one who met Ben Johnson. He did not speak of his early days to any one. He would, however, speak at length—forcefully and in detail—on subjects which were nearest his heart, whenever and wherever he sensed interest and understanding in the listener. From such unconscious self-revelation some degree of intimate knowledge is possible.

I have reason to believe that in his youth a naval career was opened to him, but the Boer War put an end to that, as it did to that of many another man. In the Klondyke, when the love of the frozen trail and the snowy wastes, the company of hard-bitten men, and the bitter struggle to survive, dwarfed in a man's heart his earlier loves and ambitions, it was said of him: “The North has got him!” In Africa it could and *can* be said of many: “The Bush has got him!”

Living for years alone, under the hardest conditions, always ready to share his last creature comfort with a needy fellow, or to risk his life to save an-

other's. Ben would not stir one yard, or modify a single conviction for financial gain. More, he consistently refused offers of assistance, even from men he knew and liked. Independence was with him a religion, and charity a creed. Perhaps that is why his favorite quotation was Adam Lindsay Gordon's lines:

"Question not, but live and labour,
Till yon goal be won.
Helping every feeble neighbour,
Seeking help from none.
Life is mostly froth and bubble,
Two things stand like stone—
Kindness in another's trouble
Courage in your own."

And he would add (with bitter irony), "The writer shot himself, 'broke,' poor devil, at thirty-six!"

While, however, financial propositions held little interest for him, any speculative thought on the ultimate destiny of mankind, and the intelligence or otherwise of the Creative Power, moved him to eager attention. The following verses, which he wrote and published some time back, illustrate the passionately inquiring trend of his mind on this subject:

". . . Mighty Builder,
Thou the Master of Creation, Nature, All,
Build us firmer, hold us faster,
See us not to ruin fall.
Send a ray to wanderers straying—
Blind, we crave a little Light;
Stumbling, doubting, hear us praying
For a Dawn on darkest night."

His original title was *To the Unknown God*, but Chambers' *Journal* (in which the verse was published) changed the title to *The Master Builder*. Many people in England wrote to him expressing their appreciation of these lines, and asked permission to use them.

A verse in similar vein he entitled *The Riddle*, which reads as follows:

“Where are we tending, what is the ending
Or the beginning of Life as we stray?
Creeping and crawling, stumbling and falling,
Are we greater or lesser than ants on the way?
Maker who maketh, Breaker who Breaketh,
Who is the Potter, and what is the Clay?”

Illustrative of his almost quixotic generosity is the following. The year before his death he sent to the *Sydney Bulletin* an amusing story of the Boer War, entitled “Some Lovely Drinks,” with a request to the editor that payment for same be handed to some crippled ex-soldier. At that time he had only two pounds of tea, and a few pounds of flour left, and practically no funds!

Kindness to women and children, and to animals, was with him a first article of faith. “Epitaph to a Dog” (published in the *Weekly Scotsman*) was well worthy of comparison with Byron's; while in his last year he sucked the venom of a snake bite from a native woman's leg, and undoubtedly saved her life.

To men he was hostile and suspicious—though always ready to relieve their physical necessities—but for this he had some justification. On one occasion he wrote to me: "If man was intended to be 'the noblest work of God,' then I say He was a bad and cruel Workman; and I judge as much by my own nature as by what I see around me." He often said he would trust nobody to handle his animals lest they ill use them. That trait, and his contempt for man's money-making propensities, explain his shooting his cattle.

CHAPTER VI

RUBY: A STORY OF CANINE COURAGE

AT MY first meeting with Ruby I liked her. Later, I loved and respected her. Later still, I mourned her sincerely. I have owned many dogs. A few inspired only contempt; the majority, that affection one feels for a faithful dependent; three others, the love one gives to a trusty comrade, in whom one yet perceives the reflection of weaknesses candid self-scrutiny has revealed in oneself. But only Ruby ever inspired respect.

Perhaps I am hypercritical, but I can never accord respect—in the sense of deference—where mental or moral weakness is apparent. Sympathy I may not withhold, but respect I can not feel or profess. Every dictum to the contrary notwithstanding, I hold that love and respect are by no means concomitants.

That Ruby exacted a tribute so seldom yielded, will convince the reader at once that she was a canine phenomenon and worthy of his attention to this brief record of the last year of her life, during which I had the privilege of knowing her.

At our first meeting I sensed vital differences between her and other members of her race I had known. I was visiting a lonely store on the Southern Rhodesian border, kept by a young man of the "chosen race." It was dark when I dismounted, and walked toward it, and before I had covered five yards a red streak whirled toward me in ominous silence, in the center of a small dust devil. My brain registered a swift impression of a large mastiff dog, and my "dog sense" directed me to bend down with extended hand, offering a calm verbal greeting.

The red shape slithered to my feet with raised hackles, and ivory fangs displayed; while two smoldering yellow flames in the eye-sockets flashed a menace. At that instant the young man ran toward me, calling to the dog in harsh, agitated tones. The hackles lowered, and I moved my hand to stroke the creature, at the same time murmuring coaxingly the name he had used. Instantly, the hair of her neck and shoulders bristled, and a soft snarl of fiendish intensity issued from the open jaws. Then she turned silently and walked away, with a curiously stately and unhurried gait.

Shaking my hand, her owner said: "That dog will get me in gaol. She has already nearly killed two natives. A week ago she bit *me*, when I took a stick to her. She is a devil, and makes friends with nobody. I wish I could sell her. I'm afraid of her!"

Now I had seen at once that Ruby conformed to no canine type I had known. And I had known many. The silence and deadly earnestness of her rush, and the gleam of her yellow eyes, were more typical of the hunting leopard. It is true she had stayed her attack when I halted; but when reassured by her master as to the legitimacy of my presence, she had still evinced hostility to my overtures, afterward departing with an air of silent detachment I had never seen in any dog. Most, I knew, would have at least shown toleration; and watchful curiosity in my further movements would have been an expected sequence.

Analyzing these peculiarities, I concluded that Ruby possessed great decision of character, and a confidence in her own strength and courage so complete that she despised the usual canine vocal aids to "frightfulness." It was apparent, too, that she held humans in contempt, and neither feared their anger nor desired their favors. A lonely self-sufficiency, and a brave fearlessness of all life might hold, distinguished her as surely as such attributes in a man stamp him with the seal of greatness.

To win the love of such a dog would, I knew, involve effort, patience and understanding, but it seemed worth while. I decided that I wanted her, and because the possession of her embarrassed him, her owner's valuation was not excessive. I paid him

two pounds, and next morning a native accompanied me, with Ruby on a leash.

In leaving, she expressed again the strong individuality that characterized all her actions. Not even by a backward glance did she show discomposure or regret. Yet throughout the thirty-mile journey to my store, she gave no manifestation of friendship for me, not even when I fed her!

She tolerated me, and gazed at me with sleepy speculation in her yellow eyes, and that was all. She was *herself*—a ruler in her own world—and I and all men were merely ciphers. So much she indicated with certainty, and for three months gave no other indication. She did her duty as a well-trained soldier might; and I fed her, as in duty bound. She expressed clearly that in her scheme of things only these material obligations existed.

I at once found that I was obliged to chain her up all day in order to trade. On the first day she knocked down two natives, stripped them, and then stood over their trembling forms until I released them, her bared fangs warning them not to rise. After that, native customers hailed my servant from a distance to inquire if she was loose, before approaching. In each attack she made no sound, neither bark, growl, nor snarl. Only a whirlwind, silent rush, a spring, a blanket torn to shreds, and yells of mortal fear from the native. For her silence in-

vested her with the terror the swift kill of a lion in the dark inspires!

When I chained her, that silence remained unbroken. She would lie watching the native customers with sleepy, indifferent eyes, and no bark or growl ever warned me of their arrival; while never did she strain on the chain to get loose. Freedom—she seemed to think—demanded action; but once chained, her responsibility ended, and it was “up to me!”

Similarly, if I left her captive when I went hunting, no whine of protest or yelp of disappointment ever came from her. She evinced no uneasiness, but watched my departure with the lazy eyes that noted all things with indifference, and awoke to life only in action. Yet in hunting—as in all else—she did her duty thoroughly and well, but strictly as a matter of duty, and without enthusiasm. One instance will suffice.

One morning I wounded a duiker and he got away. I was then two miles from the store. Two natives with me unleashed their dogs, and for half an hour the mongrels quartered the ground, occasionally tracing the spoor for a hundred yards or so, and again losing it. All the time they whimpered, and occasionally yelped, with excitement. Then I sent for Ruby. As soon as she appeared the mongrels took cover—like rusties upon whom royalty has descended unawares. For five minutes her nose

examined and rejected, and then she went off at speed, but silent as ever. In five minutes more we heard the shrill cry of the buck and raced in pursuit. We found him dead half a mile away, with the marks of her teeth in his throat, while she herself lay watching him, without sign of pleasure or excitement!

That instance was one of many, and her fame spread so that despite their fear of her, natives continually offered cattle for her. One, indeed, offered three trained oxen worth eighteen pounds! But they could have more easily bought my own body, for by that time I revered the calm inexorable spirit, and the strong, brave, independent nature of the dog, as old-time students have revered the philosophers who were their masters.

If she did not love *me*, I loved *her*. I felt humiliated that she did not demonstrate affection, because, being human, my emotions required expression, and demanded reciprocal expression, before they could content me. Because the dog could express herself in action alone, and be content with the approval of her own judgment she almost shamed me!

Then I saw that the time had come for her to reproduce her kind as Nature ordained, and sent her to the mate I deemed most fitting to sire her progeny. In a fortnight she returned, and for the first time gave evidence that she had set me apart from the world of men, in her mind. She lay under the coun-

ter of the store for the rest of that day of her return, refusing to be moved, watching every action of mine intently, and rising and resting her great head against me when I spoke to her, but silent as ever. Yet this was her first demonstration of affection, and I knew its value.

The birth of her pups was signalized by tragedy, and my first and last fight with her. Before dawn one morning my old tabby tom-cat—whom she had always viewed with tolerant disdain—crawled under my bed with his loins bitten through, and “swearing” fiendishly. Then my servant went to chain her, and came running, with blood streaming down his shin, where her jaws had seized it.

Then I went to view the pups, and in an instant felt my own shinbone cracking in the same fierce grip. Wrenching the jaws apart, I held them, and called for the chain. Attaching this to her collar, I took a turn round the veranda post and held her head short against it. For five minutes I thrashed her with a sjambok—for in spite of sentimentalists, savagery must be met with savagery, and a battle to a finish is the surest safeguard against repetitions.

As the blows fell, she jumped for my throat; but the chain held, and when the open frothing jaws closed, and the harsh snarls gave place to silence, I desisted and released her. I went at once to the scene of her night’s travail, and what I saw was

worthy of even such defense as hers. Five sleek red bodies, with her own broad head, massive limbs, and heavy jaws, lay in calm slumber, displaying none of the querulousness of new-born puppyhood. Those I sold two months later were accounted cheap at two pounds each.

Ruby watched me with wagging tail, and allowed me to handle them. Our struggle was over, and she regarded her severe punishment as of small account. Five minutes earlier she would have killed me if she could, but having failed, she admitted defeat without resentment. Thereafter, at my command she would eye me inquiringly, then wag her tail in acquiescence and obey. But never did that tail go between her legs, and never did she cringe at threat of voice or arm; while no pain could betray her into yelp or whine.

My store stood in a clearing under kopjes on the old Tuli road, and round that clearing at night leopards and hyenas prowled, with designs upon my goats. I was afraid for Ruby, for I knew the leopard's partiality for dog-flesh, and against his talons a dog has small chance of victory. Yet often during the months after her arrival I heard the soft rush of flying feet across the clearing, ending in a hissing snarl. And in the morning, great spoors showed where the spotted killer had been met at each approach by a killer as silent and determined as him-

self, on the edge of the clearing. That he had refused the challenge, spoke volumes for the fear her determined valor inspired, even in a foe with heavier weight and armament in his favor!

Twice also, I found hyenas dead on the clearing's edge, with the marks of her fangs in their throats. For she had the killing methods, and the cold ferocity of the leopard: and while the hyenas had stronger jaws, they had weaker hearts, and no greater weight than she. Yet it was in combat with a leopard that her gallant life was to end.

Denied my goats by her vigilance, one of them looted a native's kraal two miles away, and in one night killed seven. At the native's request I followed the spoor next morning, taking Ruby on a leash. The trail led into some kopjes, and there we found a duiker which the destroyer—not satisfied with seven victims—had drained of its life-blood and abandoned. A mile farther, between two shrubs on a rocky ledge about thirty yards in front of us, a sleek dappled head, with flattened ears, peered forth and snarled malevolent challenge.

I aimed at the head and fired, and the lithe form sprang from the ledge toward us, landing midway between us and the rockface, just as I drove a second cartridge home and raised my rifle again. As the feline shape leaped toward us I heard a yell behind me, and next instant the rising yellow form was met

in mid-air by a red one I knew well, which flashed past and upward as the other rose in his spring. They fell to earth,—almost at my feet,—the red and yellow bodies locked in a writhing death grapple, so that I dared not fire.

Whipping out my automatic pistol I awaited my chance, and as the yellow body rose uppermost I placed the pistol against its head and fired. At the same instant the native who had led the dog, drove his assegai through the body, and the evil life went from it. Then we saw Ruby's head beneath it, with fangs locked in the throat of her destroyer with a grip we had to pry loose with a spear-haft. Her eyes were open, but glazing fast, and from between her close-locked jaws came a stertorous, rasping moan, the only tribute to pain she ever yielded.

One glance told me she was lost to me. Her stomach was ripped open by the hind claws of the leopard, and the flesh on neck and shoulders hung in strips. Yet her grip had only tightened, and I like to think that the yellow eyes that turned their dying gaze upon me as they closed, read through the tears in my own, something of the admiration and sorrow I felt for the noble life she had offered in my service.

It seemed my shot had missed the leopard, and as he sprang she had bitten savagely the boy who held her, and leaped to my defense. Silently and reverently we bore her torn body home, and buried

it with the respect due to gallant hearts in man or beast.

But from that day until I left the store, a desolation came to it. A spirit which exemplified life lived cleanly and bravely—as men seldom live it—had departed. A spirit whose presence had enabled my own to contact with and exult in that of the Spartan mother who sent her son to battle with the words: “Come back with your shield, or upon it.”

CHAPTER VII

SPOGTER

It is frequently impossible to foretell human action from human speech—still less the thoughts inducing the former and hidden by the latter. For the cynical aphorism: "Speech was given to man to disguise his thought," contains an unfortunate amount of truth!

Action, also, is as often directed to the concealment as to the expression of human ideas. Hence we have no guarantee of accuracy in our estimate even of people we have known half a lifetime.

Some indeed—often of the best—carry to their graves, unrevealed, thoughts the world sorely needs, because they fear scorn of what they love best. And always, of course, there are the others. The vast multitude whose ignoble camouflage originates in shame, greed or desire to evade punishment.

But domestic animals are more honest, or less skilful. Lacking speech we can comprehend, every thought is reflected in terms of action, and may be estimated with some accuracy by the careful observer.

Of these was Spogter, an honest bovine friend of mine long since dead. This story interprets some of the thoughts he exchanged telepathically with his comrades into terms of human speech. It is also a record of his brave life, and a tribute to his truth and courage.

When I first knew him he was already five years old. A handsome, brindled beast, with a powerful frame, broad forehead, and mild liquid eyes, that were always watchful and wrinkled humorously at the corners. He was also one of fifty survivors of four hundred oxen, who had toiled with him for a year on the road between Fort Jameson and Tete, in Portuguese East Africa.

His comrades' decease was said to be due to tsetse fly, but from certain indications I doubted this theory at the start. I afterward found that the great mortality had been occasioned by ignorant human control, ill usage and starvation.

Then I viewed Spogter and his fellow-survivors, with suspicion. Here, I thought, were those who had clung to life by withholding their best—the "skrimshankers," dodgers and loafers! With regard to Spogter and his mate Bokveld I was wrong. Spogter's survival was due to his possession of brains as well as brawn, and his mate's to his tuition.

These two were "after-oxen" (wheelers) and pulled—one on each side—on the heavy disselboom

of the large wagon. Their duty was to throw their weight on the disselboom when their names were called—alternately—and so steer the wagon clear of trees, stumps and other obstructions.

At other times they were required merely to support the disselboom, and reserve their strength for the frequent occasions when the wagon sank deep in the soft ground, or was faced with a steep climb out of a sandy river-bed. Then they must throw their weight against the yoke, and put forth every ounce of strength they had, at the instant the eighteen oxen in front of them simultaneously strained on the long wire hawser.

Always, among eighteen oxen, there are lazy mutinous beasts who endeavor to elude these occasions for desperate effort, and to throw the work upon their fellows. Always, too, there are nervous, highly strung beasts who chafe at delays, and take pride in the exercise of their mighty strength. A good driver puts the latter in the front places of the long team, and the former in the first three or four yokes ahead of the wheelers.

Then he teaches the willing animals—and the wheelers—to stand steady at the crooning “H-a-a-nauw” of his voice, while the double whip thuds mightily on the ribs and bellies of the recalcitrants. Only when the latter—perhaps four, six or eight in number—abandon insubordination, and throw squared

shoulders hard on the yoke, does he yell the command to trek.

Every beast must be waiting for that yell, and the instant it rings out, must pull with all the force it possesses. So is the united, simultaneous strain of twenty beasts obtained, and the wagon—with obstructions already removed from the wheel tracks—moves slowly forward.

But the drivers Spogter had known on this road were both ignorant and lazy. The nervous, willing, quick-stepping animals, were put near to the wagon; and on these fell the whip when extra effort was required. Terror-stricken at the sound, they would make terrific efforts to move the load and avoid the lash; but in the darkness ahead of them the loafers would stand inert, doing nothing to aid their efforts.

And so for many hours in the night the wagon would stand in one place, with the gallant, lion-hearted animals, making ever more desperate efforts, until with trembling limbs, and breathless, exhausted bodies, they sank down in their tracks. Night after night this went on, until—denied sleep, and too weary to seek food in the daytime—their emaciated frames sank down for the last time, and Nature signalled their release from human tyranny.

Trained at three years old on a farm hundreds of miles away, Spogter and his mate at first answered every call upon their strength during the early days

on this evil road to which Fate had brought them. But no longer—as of old—did they hear the sucking sound of the cumbrous wheels emerging, and feel the yield of the forward-moving yoke in response. Morning after morning they were released, dazed from want of sleep, and staggering with weariness. Evening after evening they were inspanned again—with empty stomachs cleaving to spine—to face again the long hours of unavailing toil in the darkness.

Then one morning when outspanned, they found Maakman, a friend of their youth, who at home had always led the team, but here was inspanned just in front of them; with eight pairs of oxen between him and the road ahead. He was dying and said: "Spogter, I shall work with you no more. I take the 'long sleep' to-day. Soon you will follow me. These men do not understand us, or how to journey on the long roads. Good-by, old friend!" Then the great leader of the old farm team had stretched his weary gaunt frame, on the sun-warmed sand, drawing slow sobbing breaths. When evening came, he was left behind there—dead.

So Spogter said to his mate: "Bokveld, do as you see me do to-night. Answer no word of these men, or soon we shall be as Maakman now is, and the vultures will pick our bones!"

Throughout that night, and for many others, while the black drivers flogged and cursed, Spogter and his



VULTURES

mate knelt in the yoke when the drivers came near, and made pretense of pulling mightily, but on the yoke, Bokveld felt no strain. Then they discovered that by a sharp turn of the body outward they could break the badly made yoke-skeys, and release themselves. This always meant a rest—sometimes for twenty minutes. One night Spogter broke six and no more could be found: so on that night the lazy cursing natives outspanned them, and they slept until dawn.

Those in whom pride of power or fear of the whip was dominant, grew daily weaker, while Spogter and his mate—and those others who stood all night idle in the darkness—had strength to seek food when daylight came; and these survived.

During my first night on the road with Spogter, I spent an hour changing the positions of the team on his wagon, when it lay in mud to the bed-planks. Then I applied the sjambok to the native drivers until they attended to my instructions. When all preparations were complete I gave the command to pull. Down went Spogter and his mate on their knees, but I had double teams on the wagon and had thrashed every unwilling beast soundly, so that the wagon came with a rush that Spogter only just avoided as he scrambled up.

Then I halted the wagon and commenced to give

him a lesson with the double whip, for it was necessary that he should learn he could not hoodwink me. At the second cut he threw himself on the yoke so that it bent with the strain, and stood watching me with surprise in his large eyes. At once I desisted, and talked to him that he might know an honest pull was a sure escape from a thrashing. A little later I outspanned on the soft dry sand, although we had moved only two miles, because the animals were weary and in poor condition.

Next morning as they lay ruminating, Spogter said to Bokveld: "This man knows—as our old master knew. We must obey his word. But when the black men shout, and he is not there, we will kneel as before, and break the small stick (skeys)!"

Only by such telepathic communication can I explain the change which occurred simultaneously in Spogter and his mate. For always after that, when I called to them, these two great toilers would hurl themselves on the yoke so that more than once they broke it in half, and pitched comically forward into the quarters of the beasts in front.

Often I used them to assist other wagons whose wheelers were not powerful enough for the task, and never did those two fail. For twelve months I traveled that arduous road, and only three of Spogter's comrades slept the "long sleep"; while he and his mate grew fat and mightily mused. During that time I discovered his humor, and his courage.

Once a lazy, prentice native, tried to place the yoke on his neck, and dropped it before Spogter could get his head under it. Instantly he tossed one spreading horn upward, taking with it the native's loin-cloth, and then butted him in the stomach with his forehead. As the boy rolled in the sand with a yell, Spogter stood and surveyed him, while he calmly chewed the cud. I came up at the moment, and he turned to his place and lowered his head to the fallen yoke. As I raised it high with one hand he placed his neck beneath it, and looked round at me with nostrils wrinkled in a smile that answered my laugh.

So it was always. If I or his driver inspanned him, all that a creature without hands could do to assist he did. But whenever an inexperienced native attempted it he would be found naked, prostrate and howling, with Spogter standing ruminating over him.

Traveling on a good road he would walk peacefully along—with his bronze coat glistening in the last sun-rays—chewing the cud, with one eye fixed upon me in eternal speculation. But at my glance or mild rebuke, he would lengthen his stride and press gently against the yoke, seeming to say: "I am quite ready when you want me!"

Then one day a lion attacked as they grazed, and the scared native came running to warn me. When I reached the scene, the team stood with heads lowered, in a circle, and a bloody spoor led to the undergrowth at which they gazed.

With fire we drove Leo out, and I shot him. Down chest and belly was a long deep wound, and the blood-stain on Spogter's horn told me its cause, just as the crowding of the span against and behind him told me who had organized the defense—while on his shoulders great claws had written their revenge.

For a week, while his shoulders healed, I had much trouble in keeping him away from his wagon while traveling. He would break from the loose cattle, unnoticed, range alongside the ox which had taken his place, and butt him with vindictive fury. In this way he first revealed to me his love for his mate, and his pride in his nightly toil. But a year later he evidenced that love and pride in more striking fashion, and it is because of that final proof that I can never forget my brave old servant and comrade.

We had by that time forsaken the road in Portuguese territory, and were traveling a hundred-sixty-mile route through Nyassaland. The change from scanty and coarse herbage made all the hardy beasts voracious at first, and they became less cautious in selection.

As a result, several devoured an attractive-looking but poisonous green bean of fibrous character; and of these Spogter was one. As I inspanned him one afternoon I noticed that his usually bright eye was dull and heavy, and his movements slow. I

dosed him with linseed oil and turned him loose with the spare cattle. When we outspanned, he came to his wagon, made a half-hearted attempt to oust his substitute, and then lay down and slept close by.

For two days he neither fed nor ruminated. Each afternoon he came from the loose cattle and lined up with his span—his eyes mutely pleading to be inspanned. When I patted his shoulder and turned him away, there was both dejection and reproach in his eyes. On the third day he lay beside the wagons all day and refused the food I offered. It was evident that he was very ill, and I feared that I might have to shoot him. But when the teams came in from the veld near sundown, he struggled to his feet and lined up with his mate as usual.

At ten o'clock that night when we outspanned, the loose cattle were a mile behind, and arrived half an hour later. The herd-boy said Spogter had been unable to keep up with the others. That night for the first time he did not seek his wagon, but lay groaning alone in the darkness.

At three o'clock next morning when we went to inspan, the ox which had replaced Spogter was wandering loose,—his riem broken,—and in his place, lying as though asleep, with head stretched out toward the yoke he had carried so often, lay Spogter—dead.

Honest, loyal, great-hearted beast, imbued with

a courage and devotion many humans might be proud of, loving his mate as men seldom do; proud in the exercise of his powers, with a pride which in man creates genius. he had felt his strength failing; and used what little remained, to go to his appointed place, that when the call came—the call he was never to hear—he might be found ready and waiting! Can man do more? Or *less*?

CHAPTER VIII

MONKEY MOTHERS

IN 1919 I was traveling constantly over the three-hundred-mile area in Portuguese East Africa, between the Northeastern Rhodesian border and the lower Zambesi. During long days and nights in the bush there I came in contact with many things of profound human interest,—some of which I have described in this book,—but few, if any, impressed me more deeply than the incident I will describe in this brief sketch.

As in most uninhabited parts of Africa, monkeys and baboons were very common, and when I was lucky enough to be in camp for a day or two they frequently annoyed me as much as they interested me. Sometimes they would occupy the tall trees close to my camp at dusk, and as they donned themselves for the night, they reminded me irresistibly of a crowd of irritable parents settling down in new lodgings, each with a family of tired and complaining children!

For half an hour the din would be deafening.

Snarling cries from the females, as the males crowded their selected perches; deep grunts of anger and disgust as the latter sought other quarters, followed by harsh, angry barks and blows, as they summarily ejected half-grown, perky males, already in possession. Then protests from the latter in which defiance and fear were blended in true hobbledehoy fashion, followed by silence. A silence broken only by occasional angry grunts and shrill, querulous cries from the females.

Throughout the night at intervals, angry or pleading cries from baby monkeys would be followed by deep protesting grunts, and sharp staccato calls; while often several soft blows could be heard, followed by cries of pain. The peevish child, the irritable mother, the grumpy, awakened father, and the quick chastisement, faithfully reproduced a familiar family picture in this open-air lodging-house!

From midnight to dawn, sleep held sway. Then with the first faint streaks of light, deep rolling notes of thunderous quality came in unison from each paterfamilias; and a discordant babel of cries and the bustle of departure supervened. It was all very human, and very chastening to one's conceptions of human superiority.

But so far I had witnessed only similarities of intelligence, social organization and discipline. It was when ethical virtues, and a capacity for sacrifice

man seldom equals—and can not excel—were revealed to me, that I stood astounded, humbled and ashamed of my arrogant human conceit, which had imagined altruism the attribute of man alone.

Throughout Africa between May and August, bush fires are common. These are started by the natives to facilitate hunting, plowing, and to expedite the growth of new pasture. Generally, animals escape them easily, but when a strong wind is blowing behind them and accelerating their speed, they can be very terrible to the forest denizens. *How* terrible, I had not quite realized until one such passed within a couple of miles of my camp with a gale behind it, and curious to see its results, I walked over the route it had taken.

I soon found evidence that to many humble lives it had brought disaster. Occasionally a bush pig or a snake, here a duiker fawn, and there a porcupine, had been taken unawares, and lay scorched and dead. But within three miles I came upon a scene most pitiful.

First, at intervals, I found the remains of single monkeys—evidently the old, sick, or very youthful members of a troop which had been caught in the forest. Then came the little monkey mothers. There were four of them. Charred almost to cinders, they crouched head down to the ground with arms clasped tightly around tiny bodies at their breasts, also, alas,

charred and scorched and dead. Failing to keep up with the troop, their brave little hearts had refused to leave their babies, and had endeavored to shield them with their own bodies until they died!

I remembered that man places the spirit of sacrifice highest among his attributes, and that to that spirit all of achievement, of nobility, of heroism, in his history is due. On it his claim to immortality and to divine origin is based. Yet I wondered if indeed these humble spirits which had fled might not after all claim kinship with him? And a common origin?

Six months later, I read of the sentence of two London parents for "brutal neglect and starvation of their three young children," and I wondered, too, if such a claim to kinship should not after all be regarded by man as an honor, rather than the humiliation some consider it?

CHAPTER IX

BUSH NIGHTS IN AFRICA

As is well known, the early Dutch settlers in South Africa pushed their way inland from the coast into what was then unknown territory, by means of ox-wagons. These transported their worldly goods, their wives and families, and were at once their home and their defense against native attacks, for many months at a time.

In those days the greatest difficulties were the passage of mountain ranges, pasturage and water, and native hostility. Bush country and the deadly tsetse fly, or treacherous swamps, were not encountered for many years afterward, when the slow inward progress reached the northern Transvaal, and the borders of Rhodesia.

There were no roads in those days, and even to-day in the open plains of the Cape Colony and the Free State, many roads are merely wagon trails across virgin veld; while the main roads, and the railway routes to such towns as Kimberley and Johannesburg, have followed the track of those pioneer wagons.

Indeed, but for the ox-wagon those towns could never have existed, since for many years every inland community depended upon the wagons for the necessities of civilized life.

Yet in these times of rapid mechanical transport, newcomers to the country are prone to sneer at a mode of conveyance they regard as impossibly slow and primitive as the days of Moses. Knowing nothing of the history of wagon transport and its development, or of the days of its pride and power—when it was the lifeblood of South Africa, and the one tentacle with which civilization held fast to the great continent—they would scoff at the idea that its history contained pages of romance, of heroism and of thrilling adventure equal to any in the history of mankind!

Nevertheless, these things are true, just as it is true that it developed in the men who used it the qualities of resource, hardihood and endurance, as well as the passionate love of independence and freedom, and the touch of mysticism, which characterized the Dutch burgher of twenty-five years ago.

Though in the first instance ox-transport was used for purposes of settlement, and as a means of obtaining necessities from the centers of civilization the settlers had left, it proved later to be a source of income so lucrative—as the demands of mining and commercial pursuits exceeded the capacity of avail-

able transport—that it became a profession in itself, and “transport riding” laid the foundations of some considerable fortunes.

Most successful “transport riders” were of Dutch nationality, since simple as ox-transport appears, a great deal of experience is necessary to operate it profitably. This experience the South African Dutch had gained as they toiled day by day, rifle in hand, into a new and hostile country.

Vagaries of soil and climate, cattle diseases and training-methods, capacity of oxen, and the psychology of different native tribes, materials and manufacture of “trek” gear, construction and suitability of different types of wagons, methods of fording great rivers, and the habits of carnivora, were all items in the stock of knowledge they had acquired in the slow years of their progress; and paid for with toil and financial loss, often—even—with their lives!

Before the Boer War the day of the professional transport rider had practically ended in South Africa. The long roads from Kimberley to Bulawayo, from Maritzburg to Barberton, and from Bamboo Creek to Salisbury, were the last to be replaced by the shining railway track, and only in certain districts of the two Rhodesias might the transport rider hope for employment. Even these are to-day closed by cattle regulations due to disease, or by the substitution of mechanical transport.

To some who have spent youth and manhood on the road, this is no less than a tragedy. Though in many cases they own their own farms, and can live the simple life they are accustomed to, without financial worry, they miss—and long for—the life of the long road and the far horizon. I knew one such who died recently. He would sit for months camped in the bush with his idle wagons, and the oxen he knew and loved individually, waiting for the loads that never came, though he owned land on which he might have dwelt in comfort.

What then is the glamour and witchery of a life that not only *holds* men, but also *molds* them—body and brain—into a type distinct from their fellows? A type so distinct in all essentials that few common characteristics remain as points of contact between the men of the road and the men of the cities and settlements!

It is not ease—for transport riding is always strenuous work. It is not wealth or comfort—for high profits disappeared thirty years ago, and hardship was always inseparable from the life of the road. Also, there is often great danger of a lonely death from disease, or wild beasts (and in earlier days, from hostile natives). The risk of financial loss is greater—at least on roads north of the Zambesi—than in almost any other business.

Why then do men with heads and beards frosted



KOODOO

with the snows of sixty winters still sigh from the depths of a comfortable armchair, for the nights of the transport road? Why do old eyes still gleam as they recount stories of those nights long past?

In that word "nights," I think the solution of the riddle lies. Long ago, the pioneers discovered that by nature cattle must have the day to feed, and that they can only give service to man—without physical deterioration—during the hours of darkness. Of sleep they require little, but of time to feed and ruminate, much more than the equine species. Few people recognize this to-day. A popular magazine in South Africa appropriated the title the *Outspan* and in its preliminary advertising notices dilated on the delight of travelers and animals outspanning at sunset, whereas—with oxen at least—they would *inspan* at that hour!

The life of the transport roads was lived at night; and at night, the silent forests of Africa are very wonderful. To live by night in the African bush is to live, not in the twentieth century, or the sixteenth, or the tenth, but in the very beginning of time! To glimpse an environment which existed when man was not, and which shall perhaps endure when he has ceased to be!

To hear in the whispers of trees, the hum of insect life, and the creeping rustle of shy wild creatures, the answers to many riddles which have perplexed the

men of all ages. To hear in the lion's snarling grunt, and the hyena's mournful howl, the challenge of the Wild to the master spirit of Man the atavist; and to feel the thrill of that spirit's joyful leap to answer the challenge.

To see in the translucent stars that jewel the night skies, not "the eyes of the dead people"—as some native tribes believe—but the eyes of the Great Intelligence watching always man's progress on the appointed path. Smiling at an obstacle surmounted, and frowning at a turning aside. And above all, to feel in the loneliness and silence, the near approach of the Omnipotent, which prompts the query and supplies the swift answer, divinely hall-marked with Truth.

And then to test the knowledge gained. To look with calm confidence into the gleaming orbs of a dynamic force, a tawny fury of fang and claw, and to feel the surge of mastery and power which the labors and courage of dead generations have made him heir to. To seek and find in the dumb beasts he drives, the attributes of courage, intelligence and pride of effort, which the men of cities regard as man's exclusive heritage, but which the Spirit of the Bush has whispered dwells in these also.

To meet after many days, brothers of the road, and to find that the seal of the lonely nights is stamped on these too. That the power of expressing in silence,

joy and faith in comradeship, and quick sympathy in joy or sorrow, these have learned in the same great school.

It is not strange that men of this sort find themselves alien to the present-day type. To men who know not the great loneliness which is the temple of the infinite; whose problems are those of existence, and not of Destiny; who seek solutions yielding only Profit, and value Peace but little. Men who know not the joy of effort made solely to justify the God in Man; and with confidence and content that the reward shall be reaped by posterity. Who regard sacrifice and toil in their fellow's service as unprofitable, and yield it grudgingly, or not at all!

The Spirit of the Forest is retreating before the invasion of its sanctuary; and those men whom its teachings have gripped, are lonely to-day with a loneliness they have never known. Senses quickened in Nature's school fail to hear amid the whirl and roar of machines the voice of their great mentor, or to distinguish amid the glitter of Civilization the Gold that shone in the darkened forest shades.

And so they live with memories, happy when by chance they meet one who shares them and can understand. Regretting the days that have gone, yet confident in the assurance those days have brought them, that when the fevered activities of the present age leave men exhausted and quiescent, the Spirit of

the Silences will speak to them also, and a greater Peace, a greater Wisdom, shall come to mankind, as it came to *them*.

For this was told to them while the world lay sleeping, on many nights, by a Voice that can not lie.

THE LAST OUTSPAN

The old man sits in the sunset glow,
At the door of his lonely shack,
And dreams of nights on the transport road
That shall never more come back.
For near and far stretch the settled lands,
Shining brown with the new-turned sod;
So he turns his eyes to the evening skies,
Breathing this prayer to God:
"Oh, God, who placed in the Silence vast,
Thy Spirit that spoke to men,
Lead me hence, dear Lord, to the friends who've gone;
Or back to the road again!"

Then the God of the Silent Places
Stooped low to the old man's prayer,
And murmured in soft compassion:
"Come! I will lead you there!"
The snow-white head droops lower
In the sleep that effaces pain,
And at set of sun—as in days gone by—
Bill is out on the road again.
Out in the star-splashed, velvet gloom,
Of the forest's tree-filled space;
Where God speaks to men in accents clear,
And they meet Him face to face.
"Voorstadt! Mooiman!"¹ The leaders strain.
"Spogter! Geelbek! Hek!"²
Kruisman! Vaaltyn! Bokveld! Blom!
Trek hom,³ my beauties, trek!"
The good team heaves; the great wheels turn;
To the "voorslag's"⁴ snapping bark;

And ten thousand pounds of copper ore
 Move forward through the dark.
 For fifteen miles must be left behind
 Ere daylight comes again;
 Since the "Sable road"⁵—as all men know—
 Is the tsetse fly's domain.

Then another road in another land,
 Far away from his Transvaal home,
 Where the road winds deep in a game reserve,
 And lordly lions roam.
 Sounds through the whispering void of night,
 A driver's low-voiced cry;
 And the soft "swish, swish," of heavy sand,
 As the wagon wheels go by.
 When sudden there thunders across the dark,
 The lion's complaining grunt—
 One on the right there! No! The left!
 And another—my God—in front!
 "No room to outspan here!" Bill cries,
 "With the teams in line abreast;
 Push on to the 'spanplek'⁶ a mile ahead,
 For to-night we shall know no rest!"
 Through the rustling bush on the near left hand,
 Eyes gleam with an evil glow;
 Bill sights his rifle between them,
 And fires—dead center—low.
 A snarling roar as the shot rings out,
 And the evil eyes have gone;
 'Twere madness to follow that taloned fiend,
 On with the wagons! On!

Then a well-loved scene, with the teams all free,
 Where toil-spent men sit round
 A blazing fire, while the coffee boils,
 Ere the night dews leave the ground.
 And the light of God's good-fellowship
 Shines on each rugged face;
 For the code of the road was mutual help,
 And the pride of the white man's race.
 And Bill has found ere daylight comes,
 Release from toil and pain.

In a meeting with comrades old and true,
 And he comes not back again.
 He "trekked" as of yore, in the evening light,
 When night whispered down the wind,
 And with dawn has delivered his last great load
 To the God of all mankind.

Glossary of Dutch words.

- ¹Voorstadt, Mooiman, names of oxen in the team.
²Hek, move on (Cape Taal).
³Trek hom, pull him (it).
⁴Voorslag, the light lash at the end of the long whip.
⁵Sable road, road from the Sable Antelope mine in Northern Rhodesia.
⁶Spanplek, a cleared space in the bush giving room to outspan.

THE END





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